

# In These Times

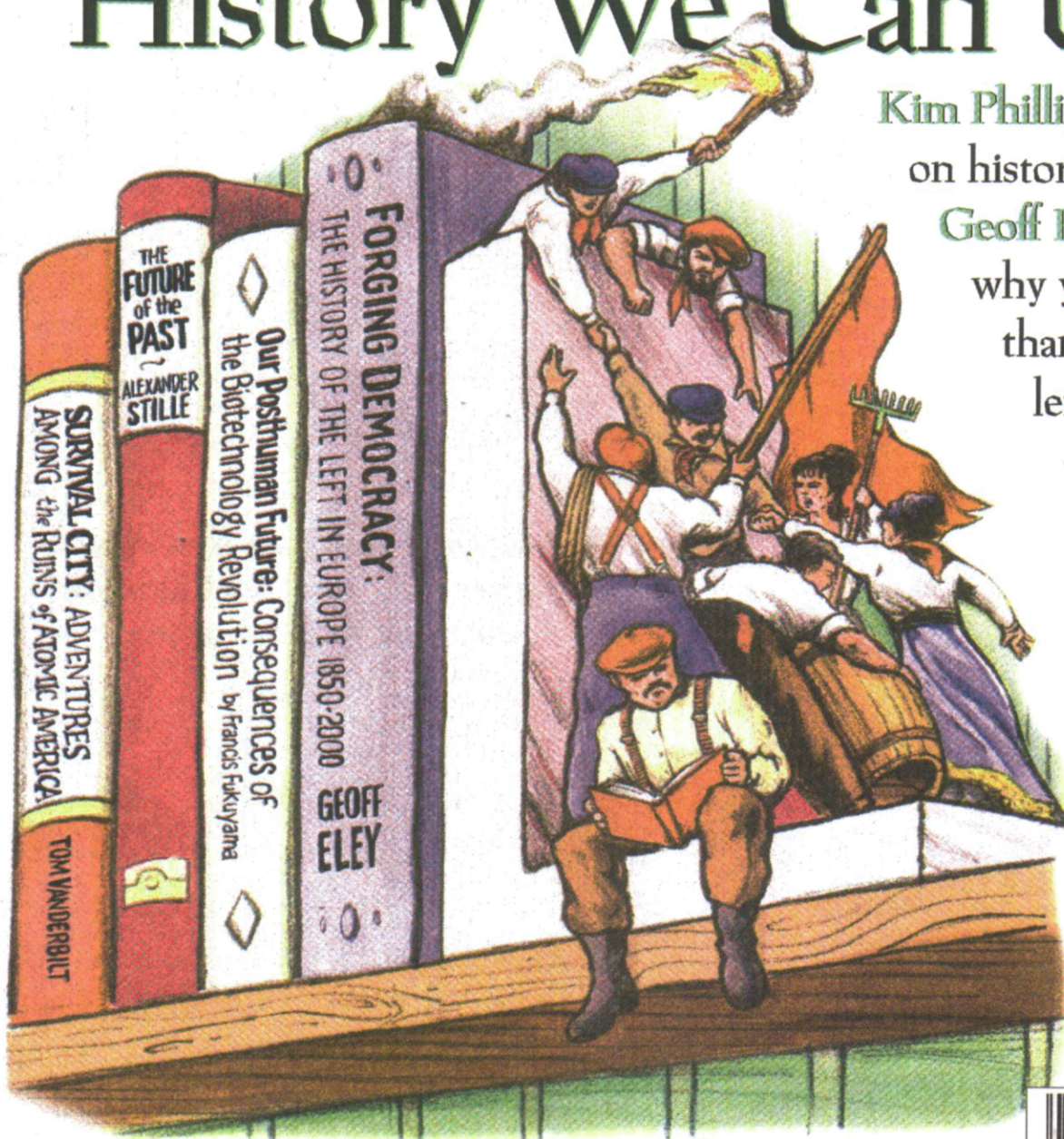
INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

June 10, 2002

## History We Can Use

Kim Phillips-Fein  
on historian  
Geoff Eley and  
why you can  
thank radical  
leftists for  
democracy

and **more**  
in **Spring**  
**Books**



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## Editorial

# Courting Disaster

**P**resident Bush's unprecedented "unsign-  
ing" of the International Criminal  
Court treaty will not stop the court's  
creation in July. However, it is a wrong-headed  
repudiation of international cooperation and  
the rule of law that symbolizes a fundamental  
injustice in the "new world order."

Despite rhetorical support for human  
rights, the United States—even under  
Clinton—was hostile toward creating such a  
court, which would both pressure national  
judicial systems to prosecute individuals for  
genocide, crimes against humanity and seri-  
ous war crimes and provide a new interna-  
tional body to deal with these universally  
condemned atrocities. A ratifying country,  
the U.N. Security Council or an elected  
prosecutor will be able to start an investiga-  
tion with the approval of a pretrial chamber  
of judges in the event that the government  
of a suspected war criminal willfully  
obstructs or is incapable of conducting an  
investigation on its own.

U.S. participation in negotiations strength-  
ened aspects of the treaty, such as protections  
of due process, but now the court will evolve  
without U.S. influence. Worse, if the Senate  
approves the House-passed American Service  
Members Protection Act, Congress would  
prohibit any U.S. cooperation with the court,  
authorize the president to use  
any means necessary to free  
U.S. personnel detained by  
the court, and punish govern-  
ments that ratify the treaty.

The United States claims  
to be concerned about  
"politically motivated" trials of Americans  
by an "unaccountable" international body.  
Both legally (there are multiple safeguards  
that would guarantee the United States  
could investigate its own personnel) and  
politically (the influence of the United  
States and its allies would make it unlikely  
for a prosecutor to press charges),  
Washington has little to fear. In any case,  
under current international law, any coun-  
try could prosecute Americans for war  
crimes in their own national courts, even  
without an International Criminal Court.

Although the court is an important insti-  
tutional step beyond the ad-hoc tribunals for  
Yugoslavia and Rwanda, there's more risk of  
it being too weak to do the job rather than its  
being too strong. U.S. rejection of the court  
is thus mainly a symbolic statement that  
America is not accountable to anyone.

Bush's destructive assertion of unilateral  
power and rejection of international agree-  
ments, from the Kyoto accords to the Anti-  
Ballistic Missile treaty, reflects what John B.  
Judis has identified as the Hobbesian mentality  
of an administration that sees the United  
States as fighting against a hostile and unreli-  
able world. Yet even the Clinton administra-  
tion, which was more amenable to  
multilateralism and treaties, saw the United  
States as an especially privileged and powerful  
country, "the indispensable nation," in former  
Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's words,  
that must be free to enforce its will.

Protecting U.S. sovereignty is not the  
question. International agreements are both  
an exercise of sovereignty and a surrender of  
some independence for a greater good. But  
in practice, powerful nations always have  
more sovereignty. Bush wants the United  
States to serve as the world's investigator,  
policeman, prosecutor, judge and execu-  
tioner. This is an imperial ideal, not an  
assertion of sovereignty. Yet when it comes  
to globalization, Bush happily subordinates  
U.S. sovereignty to multinational corpora-  
tions and global financial markets—and is  
clamoring for "fast track" authority to fur-  
ther weaken national sovereignty over com-  
merce and culture.

**Rejection of the court is mainly a  
symbolic statement that America  
is not accountable to anyone.**

The real issue is popular sovereignty, which  
relies on both democracy and human rights.  
Nation-states are still important as means for  
people to exercise control over their lives,  
but—starting with his election—Bush stands  
opposed at every turn to popular sovereignty.  
The war on terrorism has become a cover for  
greater secrecy and repression of civil liberties,  
as well as an aggressive, unilateralist foreign  
policy. The skewed tax cuts deprived the gov-  
ernment of money needed for health care,  
education and countless other needs.

The International Criminal Court could give  
life to the growing commitment to securing  
human rights and popular sovereignty through  
international cooperation. It is in the interest of  
the people of the United States to support such  
developments. But the court is not part of  
Bush's game plan for wielding global power  
without constraint.

—David Moberg

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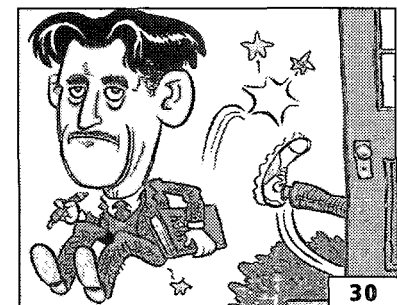
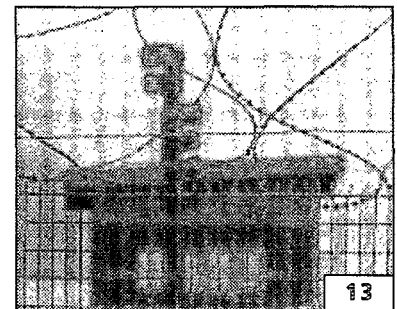
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Cover illustration by Mike Werner

## Downright Shocking

### Rising neofascism in France

By Doug Ireland

Thanks to the left's electorate—which wanted to ensure the lowest possible score for the racist Jean-Marie Le Pen and his National Front—conservative French President Jacques Chirac was re-elected May 5 with 82 percent of the vote. But U.S. media failed to understand that the presidential runoff actually confirmed the solid implantation of the National Front in important regions of France; and, in fact, Le Pen increased his score for the neofascist right by some 720,000 votes compared to the first-round election on April 21.

In the traditional left-wing bastions of the industrial North, Le Pen ran 4 to 5 percent ahead of his national 18 percent score, capturing nearly a quarter of the working-class vote. In the South, where there is a sizable Arab and black immigrant population from France's former colonies, Le Pen's racist-populist demagoguery won him between 25 and 30 percent in many places (example: 27 percent in multiracial Marseille, France's second-largest city).

These results were all the more disturbing because they followed two weeks of intense

hammering away at Le Pen by all the mass media; all the unions; the traditional parties of left and right (even one of the Trotskyist parties—Alain Krivine's LCR—urged a vote for the odious Chirac); sports and entertainment stars; and the business leadership's organization (MEDEF) and the Catholic Episcopate (neither ever make election recommendations). Exit polls said that just 10 percent of Le Pen's first-round voters deserted him in the runoff—those who voted for him only as a protest against politics as usual. But Le Pen's runoff score was a vote of *adhesion*, not protest.

Le Pen founded the National Front a quarter century ago with the extremist dregs of French political life—including veterans of the all-French Charlemagne Division of Hitler's Waffen SS and the OAS (Secret Army Organization, whose bloody bombing campaign in the '60s to maintain French power in Algeria included assassination attempts on Jean-Paul Sartre and even President Charles de Gaulle). And while this year Le Pen largely avoided the anti-Semitic and crudely racist jibes that have marked his discourse in the past, he told a regional newspaper (in the wake of massive daily anti-Le Pen demonstrations in the streets): "We hear a lot these days that Chirac is a crook and Le Pen a fascist—I prefer the latter adjective."

If one could claim that some of Le Pen's first-round protest voters ignored his true

colors (like the 18 to 25 age group, among whom he came in first of 16 candidates), it's impossible—after two weeks of anti-fascist tumult—to make that assertion for his voters in the runoff.

Le Pen's presidential runoff score also suggests that the National Front may be strong enough to keep its candidates on the runoff ballot in half the country for the two-stage legislative elections beginning June 9 (for which the district-by-district threshold is 12.5 percent). This means that in many places the candidates of the "united left" (Socialists, Communists, Greens and the Left Radicals) could be eliminated in the first round, leaving runoff duels between the National Front and Chirac's newly founded coalition, the Union for a Presidential Majority. In others, Le Pen's candidates could split the right-wing vote and allow left victories.

The most positive development has been the political awakening of a new generation of French youth, which many are comparing to that of May 1968. The day after Le Pen's first-round victory over Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, it was the under-voting-age *lycéens*, reinforced by college students—both hitherto overwhelmingly careerist and anti-political—who led the growing waves of daily anti-fascist demonstrations: 100,000 on the first day, 400,000 by the end of the first week, and culminating in huge May Day demonstrations that put some 1.5 million trade unionists, middle-class left voters and students into the streets in 400 cities all over France.

But the Europe-wide wave of racism that has been motoring the rise of the extreme right also gave the British a wake-up call days before the French runoff when the neofascist British National Party—whose leader, the Cambridge-educated Nick Griffin, proclaims its goal is "a white Britain"—for the first time ever won three council seats in racially conflicted Burnley (the British press called it "the Le Pen effect").

Next rendezvous with the European extreme right: May 15 in the Netherlands, where the ticket led by the xenophobic demagogue Pim Fortuyn had threatened to make an entry in force into parliament in the historically tolerant country. Anger at Fortuyn's assassination on May 6 could well reinforce the expected important score for his list. ■



PASCAL LE SEGRETTAIN/GETTY

Le Pen lost the presidency, but his National Front party could complicate regional elections.



## Green Scare

Activists targeted as 'terrorists'

By Hank Hoffman

In the wake of February 12 congressional hearings on the purported "eco-terrorism" threat, Jeffrey Kerr, lawyer for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), wonders whether activists will soon be asked, "Are you now or have you ever been a vegetarian?"

Kerr speaks only half in jest. PETA was targeted as a supporter of eco-terrorism at the hearings because in April 2001, the animal rights group donated \$1,500 to the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) Press Office. In a letter from Rep. Scott McInnis (R-Colorado), PETA was asked to defend the contribution. The group said the money was meant to "assist [then ELF spokesman] Craig Rosebraugh with legal expenses related to free speech."

The congressional hearings focused overwhelmingly on the property destruction committed by groups like the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and ELF. McInnis, chairman of the House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health and hearings organizer, has made a fight against eco-terrorism his new crusade. He made waves last fall when he sent a letter, signed by several other Republicans, to eight mainstream environmental groups—Greenpeace, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Earthjustice and League of Conservation Voters. Waving the bloody shirt of September 11, he challenged them to "publicly disavow the actions of eco-terrorist organizations" like ELF and ALF.

Although none of the groups either advocated or committed such acts—and some, like the Sierra Club, had a history of denouncing them—they all responded affirmatively, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm or disdain. Earthjustice executive director Vawter Parker wrote that he was "disgusted by the assumption of the signers of the letter that the people answer to Congress; it used to be the other way around." McInnis' letter was viewed as a clumsy attempt to establish guilt by association, and his subsequent



ROBERT VISSER / GETTY

The crackdown on "eco-terrorism" spreads to other activist groups.

claim of having formed a "coalition" with the groups to combat eco-terrorism, laughable.

"It's the newest brand of McCarthyism, because lies and half-truths are being spewed forth by people in the pockets of industries," Kerr says of being targeted at the hearings. "It's frightening from a freedom and liberty point of view when you are labeled a terrorist because you're helping to defend an individual's fundamental constitutional rights." PETA has had nothing to do with the actions labeled as eco-terrorism, Kerr says, and neither condemns nor condones them.

ELF and ALF—more autonomous cells and individuals than actual groups—claim to have inflicted upwards of \$40 million in property damage over the past five years. The sabotage campaign has been waged with firebombs and directed at targets that include lumber companies, a ski resort development and an agricultural genetic research institute.

ELF guidelines posted online require group members to "take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human"—and no deaths or serious injuries have resulted from any ELF or ALF direct actions. Despite their

strictures against inflicting harm on individuals, the two groups are now considered by the FBI to be the country's foremost domestic terrorism threat. Law enforcement authorities have been largely unsuccessful in finding and prosecuting the perpetrators, but say that it's only a matter of time before one of these actions results in death.

As the hearings demonstrated, since September 11, an ongoing effort to criminalize nonviolent, direct-action dissent by associating it with violence and property destruction has gained steam. Two bills that would virtually criminalize protest—and not just violent protest—are now pending at the state and federal levels. Rep. George Nethercutt (R-Washington) introduced his Agroterrorism Prevention Act last August to combat attacks on "plant enterprises" like the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture, leveled by fire last year.

Under Nethercutt's bill—which upgrades penalties for conduct "intended to injure, intimidate, or interfere with plant or animal enterprises"—uprooting a field of genetically engineered corn would be considered terrorism. Another bill

before the Pennsylvania state legislature, hailed as a "model bill" by the anti-environmental Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, would also so broadly define eco-terrorism as possibly to cover activists in a sit-in blockade at a store selling old growth lumber.

McInnis denies he is motivated by post-September 11 political opportunism. The hearings, he says, were scheduled last May. "I don't think we need new legislation. We need awareness."

The acts for which ELF and ALF claim responsibility are already illegal, he notes. "The question is, how do we get past the Robin Hood mystique some of these organizations are successful at building?" McInnis says he will continue to investigate financial contributions to groups like ELF and ALF.

There are disagreements within the broad environmental movement as to whether the actions of ALF and ELF actually constitute "terrorism." Some contend that they don't meet the definition because they aren't directed at inflicting physical harm to people. In an unsolicited letter to McInnis, Ray Vaughan of

WildLaw, a non-profit environmental law firm, likened monkeywrenching sabotage to the Boston Tea Party.

ELF itself doesn't characterize what it does as terrorism. But ironically, Craig Rosebraugh, who was subpoenaed to testify at the hearings and until recently was ELF's spokesman, may disagree. McInnis is using the eco-terrorism issue as a "divide and conquer" tactic against the environmental movement, he says. In a phone interview, he says that he differs from the ELF in viewing their actions as terrorism—"But I don't consider that negative."

"I think the actions they engage in are purposely conducted to cause that fright, to cause terror in industries to make them stop acting in ways that are contrary to the health of the environment," says Rosebraugh. Successful social movements, he argues, "have used every tool in the toolbox. There's the necessity of not only legal campaigns but also, in most, if not all, occasions, a wholehearted illegal campaign involving terrorism, property destruction and beyond." ■

## Smart ALEC

A little-publicized group wields corporate power

By Bill Berkowitz

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) may be one of the least known—but most powerful—right-wing groups around. ALEC members sponsored more than 3,100 pieces of legislation during 1999-2000, and more than 400 of these bills were passed.

ALEC was founded in 1973 by right-wing statigist Paul Weyrich, who helped raise the money that created the Heritage Foundation and was influential in founding both the Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition. Weyrich currently runs the Washington-based Free Congress Foundation, through which he has founded National Empowerment Television, a network designed exclusively for conservative organizations.

But it's multinational corporations and industry associations that make ALEC's work possible. ALEC's underwriters "represent almost a who's who of corporate America," says a recent report by Defenders of Wildlife and the Natural Resources Defense Council—including Enron, the former Amoco, Chevron, Texaco, R.J. Reynolds, AT&T, the American Nuclear Energy Council, the Chlorine Chemistry Council, the American Petroleum Institute and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

The report documents how corporations work with state legislators to push an industry-friendly agenda. The foreword notes, "Payments [from corporations] might be membership dues, fees to sit on nine industry-specific committees that approve 'model' bills, expenditures for lavish parties and entertainment, or 'scholarships' to pay for targeted legislators to attend ALEC's junket-like meetings."

ALEC has a full agenda, but it focuses on environmental and energy-related issues. Its task force on Energy, Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture puts forward legislative initiatives with benign-sounding names, such as "The Environmental Good Samaritan Act," the "Environmental

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

### ANOTHER SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE WAR INFORMATION COUNCIL

IN THE WAR ON TERROR, IT IS YOUR PATRIOTIC DUTY TO TRUST THE ADMINISTRATION--AND NO ONE ELSE! SO IF YOU HEAR SEDITIONARY TALK OF WIDESPREAD CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN--DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE DECEIVED!

HAH! AS IF WE'D EVER LISTEN TO PEACENIK PROPAGANDA LIKE THAT!

OUR DAISY CUTTERS TARGETED ONLY THOSE WHO DESERVED TO DIE!

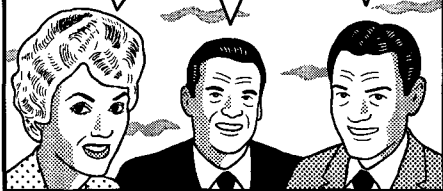


OR IF YOU HEAR SOME CRAZED RADICAL WHINING ABOUT HOW THE NEWLY-LIBERATED WOMEN OF THAT COUNTRY ARE STILL SUBJECT TO HARSH ISLAMIC LAW--WELL, YOU JUST REMIND THEM THAT GIRLS CAN NOW GO TO SCHOOL THERE!

AND TO EXECUTE SOMEONE FOR ADULTERY NOW, YOU NEED FOUR WITNESSES!

THE TALIBAN DIDN'T REQUIRE ANY WITNESSES!

IF THAT'S NOT PROGRESS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS!



AND IF YOU READ ABOUT A RECENT REPORT CLAIMING THAT OUR HIGHLY PUBLICIZED FOOD DROPS IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN WERE REALLY A COMPLETE FAILURE--JUST FOLLOW THE LEAD OF MOST MAJOR MEDIA OUTLETS AND IGNORE THE STORY!

AND WHAT BUNCH OF LEFTIST WACKOS WROTE THAT REPORT, ANYWAY?

ER--ACTUALLY THEY WERE RETIRED SPECIAL FORCES OFFICERS...

AHEM! MOVING RIGHT ALONG...



JUST REMEMBER, CITIZENS--IF AN OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSON DIDN'T SAY IT, IT CAN'T BE TRUE! AND EVEN IF IT IS--WHO CARES? IT'S ANCIENT HISTORY! WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT NOW!

BOY...A MASSIVE U.S. INVASION OF IRAQ SURE IS INEVITABLE!

IT SURE IS! BUT GEORGE BUSH IS SURE WISE ENOUGH TO AVOID SETTING OFF WORLD WAR THREE IN THE PROCESS!

SURE HE IS...

ER--I MEAN--HE SURE IS!





Literacy Improvement Act," the "Groundwater Protection Act" and "The Private Property Protection Act." On Earth Day 1998, the task force's staff director said, "The best chance we have to improve the environment is to break the stranglehold of the command-and-control policies promoted by the EPA and the extremist environmental lobby."

The group's issues also include health care, land use, tobacco restrictions, mandated employee benefits, utility regulation, agriculture, tax policy, education and much more.

ALEC, a Washington-based non-profit, has an annual budget of "roughly" \$6 million and a staff of 30. According to Media Transparency, a Web site tracking "the money behind the media," since 1985 ALEC has received more than \$2.5 million in grants from the Allegheny Foundation, the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, the Castle Rock Foundation (Coors Family), the Bradley Foundation and several other conservative groups.

More than 100 of its current members hold senior posts in their state legislatures. ALEC counts 12 sitting governors, including George Pataki (New York), Frank Keating (Oklahoma) and John Engler (Michigan), and more than 80 current members of Congress among its powerful alumni. According to its Web site, the group was formed to create "a bipartisan membership association for conservative state lawmakers who shared a common belief in limited government, free markets, federalism, and individual liberty." However, only three of ALEC's state chairs—those in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas—are Democrats. In addition, only one of the 29 members of ALEC's Board of Directors is a Democrat.

Corporations influence ALEC because they foot most of the bills. While legislators pay only \$50 for a two-year membership, ALEC's more than 300 corporate sponsors pay annual membership dues ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, in addition to task force fees ranging from \$1,500 to \$5,000.

ALEC's success is in part due to the reality that 41 state legislatures are only in session on a part-time basis, and 33 states have no paid legislative staff to speak of. Since the number of bills they consider often overwhelms legislative aides, ALEC's "model" bills and "packets of background information on key issues" become a handy shortcut to understanding a wide range of state issues.

Special interests may have attained a near stranglehold on Congress, but ALEC's triumph is unassailably the public's loss. In 1910, after his second term in the White House, Teddy Roosevelt said: "We must drive the special interests out of politics. The citizens of the United States must effectively control the mighty commercial forces which they have themselves called into being. ... To put an end to it will neither be a short nor an easy task, but it can be done." ■

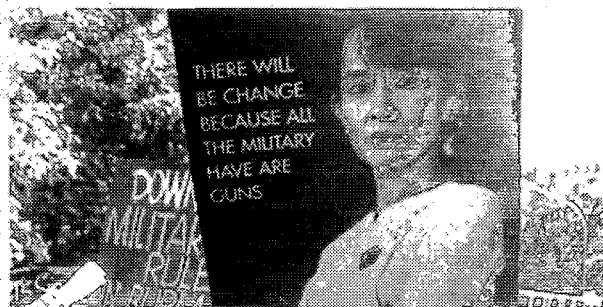
Bill Berkowitz is a freelance writer covering conservative movements.

### Burmese Nobel Prize Winner Freed

"It's a new dawn for the country," Aung San Suu Kyi told a cheering crowd in Burma's capital, Rangoon, after being released from 19 months of house arrest. In what many are interpreting as a concession to international critics, Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and leader of the opposition party the National League for Democracy, was released by Burma's military junta on May 6.

Burma (called Myanmar by the junta) has been the subject of harsh economic sanctions by European governments and the United States for its long-standing refusal to recognize Suu Kyi's democratically elected government (annulled by the military immediately following elections in 1990). Aside from a five-year period that ended in September 2000, during which she was permitted to move about the capital but otherwise unable to travel freely, Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since 1989.

International governments and human rights groups hailed the move, saying it raised hopes Burma may move toward further democratic measures, including reforming the country's constitution and granting representation to the NLD and to ethnic minorities. Many said that for the move to be considered a genuine gesture of goodwill, however, the State Peace and Development Council, the governing arm of the military, would need to release hundreds of political prisoners still held by the government. (Observers noted cautiously that Suu Kyi's release was not broadcast on the official state media, controlled by a government reluctant to acknowledge Suu Kyi's mass popular support.) An estimated 1,500 to 2,000 political prisoners remain jailed, some for crimes as slight as espousing democracy. Seventeen members of Suu Kyi's party elected in 1989 also remain in prison.



Protest signs in support of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Suu Kyi indicated that her party and the SPDC will remain in contact, but "we have made no specific arrangements," she said. "We only hope the dawn will move forward very quickly into full morning."

### House Pages Smoked Out

Eleven House pages were relieved of their duties after allegedly being caught smoking marijuana in late March. The 72 House pages, who range between the ages of 16 and 18, are hand-picked to represent their district by members of Congress. All of the dismissed pages worked for Republican representatives.

The pages were turned in by a roommate turned snitch, *Roll Call Daily* reported on March 30. House officials declined to comment on the incident. The National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) has offered the dismissed pages summer internships.

—Kristie Reilly



## Girl Power

### Women Win Big in Costa Rica

By Tim Rogers

Costa Rican women scored a groundbreaking victory in the country's recent congressional elections. Already a proven leader in peace and democracy, this small Central American country now ranks No. 1 among all Western hemisphere governments for women's participation, and sixth in the world behind the Scandinavian countries.

Following the country's February 3 general elections, more than 33 percent of Costa Rica's new law-making authority are women. Women now represent the single largest voting bloc in a deeply fractionalized Legislative Assembly, which took office May 1. "This is an enormous revolution for Costa Rican society," says Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC) deputy Gloria Valerín. "We are going to bring a woman's vision to the Legislative Assembly. In just four years, we have nearly doubled the number of women in Congress."

Although women have had some representation in Congress since the early

'50s, not until now have they filled enough seats to wield genuine power in the legislature. Thanks to a 1988 law of equality, at least 40 percent of the names on each parties' congressional candidate list must be women (in congressional elections, Costa Ricans vote for a party list, not a candidate. The number of candidates a party sends to Congress depends on what percentage of the vote they win).

However, as the parties continue to aggressively seek women's votes, even the more traditional male politicians are beginning to understand the importance of putting women higher up on their party's candidate list, ensuring more female deputies are elected. Analysts believe that female participation in government will continue to grow and that women will win even more seats in the next congressional election in 2006.

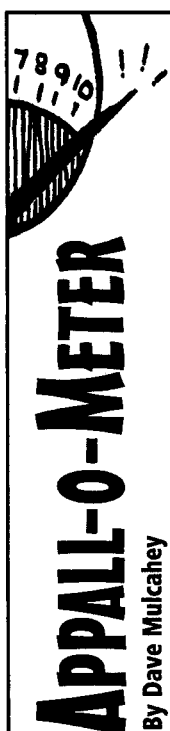
The strong showing of women in Congress is even more remarkable considering Costa Rica, like many Latin American countries, is only just beginning to awaken from its old-time *machista* machine, where gender roles are clearly delineated and women have been almost universally excluded from governing.

Despite wearing different party colors, the women lawmakers share a similar

vision for the country and say they will vote across party lines on projects that promote gender equality, protect children's rights, assist single mothers and prevent domestic violence and sexual abuse. "We are going to put the country back on the right track by promoting the values of sustainable human, economic and environmental development," says National Liberation Party (PLN) congresswoman Joyce Zurcher. "The current values are totally wrong. We can't entirely blame [men] for this, but they are the ones who have had control of the ball."

The congresswomen draw a fine line between negotiating with other legislators and surrendering their agenda. "If the men are not willing to work with women, they will have to change their ways," says Citizen Action Party (PAC) deputy Elvia Campbell. "This is the only road toward initiating a new phase in Costa Rica's democracy."

Although many activist groups in Costa Rica applaud the increased participation of women in government, some say there is still room for improvement. "Women represent half of the population, but only 33 percent of lawmakers," notes Margarita Penón, a PAC congresswoman. "There is still much to be done." ■



#### Dangerous Job 3.4

According to a report on Com-mondreams.org, in the past seven months 11 internationally prominent microbiologists have died in pretty strange circumstances. The best-known case was that of Don Wiley, a Harvard scientist and one of the country's foremost authorities on infectious diseases. In November, police found his body in the Mississippi River and concluded he got dizzy and fell off a bridge in Memphis. (Hey, professors are a clumsy bunch.)

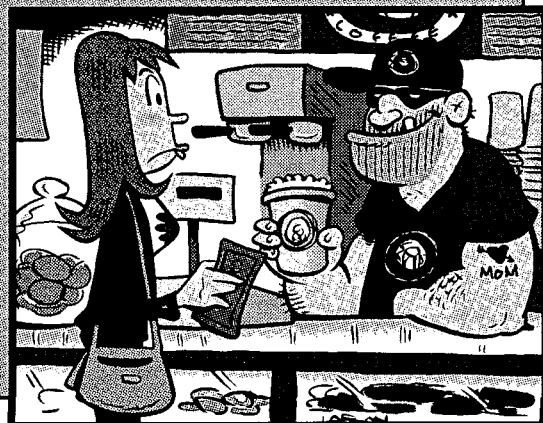
Some other lowlights: One was killed in an apparent carjacking in Florida. Another was slashed and stabbed with a sword in his Virginia farmhouse. An Australian mousepox expert died from exposure to nitrogen in an airlocked lab. A Russian was found bludgeoned to death in his home. A Brit was found dead in his home naked from the waste down. A Russian expat was shot by

a fellow microbiologist as she opened the door for a pizza delivery. The colleague then took his own life. Another Brit died, finally, in a hit-and-run while jogging near his home.

#### A Score With That? 1.2

In the business-lit bestseller *Who Moved My Cheese?*, American working stiffs were chided for expecting their livelihoods to be handed to them on a plate. If you want to eat, the book suggested, you better be prepared to hustle. Well, the message seems to have hit home even among the criminal community. Consider the pair of robbers in Monroe, Washington, who gamely served customers in the Starbucks they were knocking over. According to The Associated Press, the robbers got into the

coffee shop before opening time and held up employees at gunpoint. Apparently there wasn't enough dough for them in the safe, so they tied up a couple of employees, put on Starbucks aprons, and ordered a third employee to help them wait on drive-through customers. After a half-hour rendering more-or-less genial customer service, they beat it with the proceeds. They remain at large.



TERRY LABAN



# White House Press Corps? No Thanks.

By Heather McCabe

Call it life imitating documentary film. Alexandra Pelosi's video documentary *Journeys with George* spawned a media pack of its own as soon as it hit the film festival circuit at Austin's South by Southwest Film Festival in March.

The debut of the film attracted so much press that Pelosi found herself—in a similar spot as her subject, George W. Bush on the campaign trail—being followed from screening to screening, even to bars, by a drove of journalists eager to secure an interview. Unlike the president, however, reporters never took issue with her alcohol intake.

In 2000, NBC assigned Pelosi to cover the presidential race from inside *Access Air*, the plane that flew the campaign press corps to hundreds of stump speeches and midnight rallies. Pelosi kept track of the year-long road trip on her digital camera. The result is what Pelosi calls her "home movie" of life on the campaign trail.

Pelosi grew up in politics, like Bush, but she was raised on the other side of the fence. Her mother, Nancy Pelosi, is the House Democratic whip and represents the California district that includes most of San Francisco. Pelosi's grandfather, Thomas D'Alesandro Jr., served five terms in Congress and then three terms as mayor of Baltimore. "Some kids went to summer camp," says the younger Pelosi. "I went on the campaign trail with Jerry Brown for president."

*Journeys with George* gives an up-close look at what Bush was like after-hours on the campaign trail, sidling up to reporters with his casual, if sometimes goofy, sense of humor. As Richard Wolffe, a reporter with *The Financial Times*, describes Bush's character onscreen, "I think he's a pretty bad speaker, but he's great with shaking hands. I mean, he's truly gifted with shaking hands."

Pelosi admits to feeling compromised by having to maintain her relationship and access to Bush while working for NBC. In fact, the film turns around this premise—that

journalists lose their freedom, even their identity, inside the "bubble." In a voice-over, Pelosi remarks about her birthday spent on the road: "By the time the Bush camp had brought me my fourth birthday cake and my network hadn't even called, I began to wonder who I was working for."

Bush instantly befriends Pelosi and camera. In one scene, Bush walks up behind Pelosi as she's saying she doesn't like "them," referring to other reporters. But Bush takes her comment to mean the politicians standing around, including himself. "I'm glad we're going to be on the same plane soon," he jokes. "Do you like gin?" "I can drink it," says Pelosi.

"Show that to her family," Bush instructs the person holding the camera.

The documentary looks, on the surface, to be an entertaining case study in how Bush created a successful buzz around himself, rather than a sobering look at the campaign process. On the plane, the whirl of the blender in the margarita corner (the press, not the president's) sets the rhythm towards the end of the trip. But the film is a subtle, biting commentary on the institution of "pack" journalism, in which a horde of reporters follows a politician's carefully scripted activities, manufacturing cookie cutter news. Pelosi reveals what it's like to be inside the campaign press corps, but she lets audience members do their own thinking about what that means, or how it might be changed.

Even in person, Pelosi is reluctant to criticize the

institutions (journalism and politics) that she comes from. When I ask her how campaign coverage should change, she says "pack journalism is an outdated concept." But then she stops and says she's not "going there." "If I start trying to put my own personal opinions on the process, it sort of undermines my mission of telling my own story," she says. "It will alienate people, and I don't want that. I want people to make their own opinions. [Other] people's opinions are just as valuable as mine."

Pelosi may have preferred staying holed up in her living room editing her movie to joining the White House press corps. But, unwittingly, she hasn't left the pack behind. She's just on the other side of it (at least for the moment). She isn't above crediting part of the success of her film to the reciprocal nature of pack journalism, however. "(Bush) helped me do my job, and I helped him do his," she says dryly. "That's the dirty little secret of journalism—when you're the reporter covering the campaign, if he wins, you're the White House press corps. If he loses, [it's like,] remember Dubya? Where's he now?"

*Journeys with George* will air on HBO in November. ■



*Journeys with George*: on the campaign press plane.



# Understanding Arafat



JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY

By Charmaine Seitz

**A**rafat is the problem and the solution," was the assessment of Faisal Hussein, the Jerusalem political magnate, as he leaned back into a porch chair at his Jericho summer home in 1999.

Husseini, one in a long line of Palestinian nationalists, spoke then of his frustration with the project of building a Palestinian state. He said Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had been mistaken in neglecting legal structures in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and in rewarding former activists with appointments that demanded expertise they lacked. "There is a small circle around him giving bad advice," Hussein said.

Three years later, Hussein is no longer Jerusalem's political fulcrum, having suffered a deadly heart attack on a mission to mend another Arafat blunder: bridges burned with Kuwait after Palestinians supported Iraq during the Gulf War. But Arafat continues his contentious role at the center of the Palestinian national cause. His function seems forever controversial.

"By any objective standard, [Arafat is] a terrorist, murderer and a pathological liar," says former Israeli Mossad official Yossi Alpher, who describes himself as "left-of-center." Reflecting a sense of betrayal, he says of Arafat, "I thought that you could make an agreement with him." Alpher blames his disillusionment on the breakdown in Camp David peace talks and his resulting conclusion that Arafat cannot accept "Israel's existence as a Jewish state on the land."

Alpher's opinions are increasingly widespread in both Israel and the United States. The gradual process of discrediting Arafat in the hopes that someone better might come

along did not begin with current Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (who arrived at the White House on May 7 carrying a 91-page policy book alleging Arafat's terrorist connections before abruptly returning to Israel after a suicide bombing near Tel Aviv). Desperate to win the 2000 elections, then Prime Minister Ehud Barak hinged his platform on blaming Arafat for the breakdown in peace talks. "It takes two to make peace," he told Israelis, hinting that other Palestinian leaders might do a better job.

Sharon, his successor, picked up the theme. "The goal of terrorists—those who send them, help them and allow them to act—their goal is to drive us out of here," Sharon said last December, just after Israeli rockets fired at least nine missiles at Arafat's Gaza helipad, effectively grounding the Palestinian leader. "The person who is directly responsible for all of this is Arafat—and this is how we will proceed."

**W**hile Palestinians bristle at charges like these, they, too, have criticisms of their leader. The five weeks that Arafat spent confined to several rooms of an office, surrounded by Israeli soldiers with little food and no running water, won him public affection for his courage, one of his oft-lauded traits. Now, however, the pendulum is swinging back the other way. Palestinians emerged from the Israeli invasion of the West Bank to find their homes and offices damaged, public order in regress and long-loathed politicians vying for power.

The only consensus is that the Palestinian house is in absolute disarray. This is certainly not the first time that Arafat has been



pressed to change his leadership style. Back in 1999, the Council for Foreign Relations issued a damning report on Palestinian Authority corruption and lack of transparency. Arafat responded by appointing a committee to implement the report's recommendations, but that group's only visible act was to consolidate access to the official purse.

This February, one of the report's authors was asked if he saw reform resulting from a clamoring by the *intifada*'s "young guard." "I do not see that happening under the present conditions," said analyst Khalil Shikaki. "It would be an excellent step to be taken, nonetheless, the leadership—in particular, Arafat—does not feel the need to take steps toward reform. He is getting accustomed to the situation as it is."

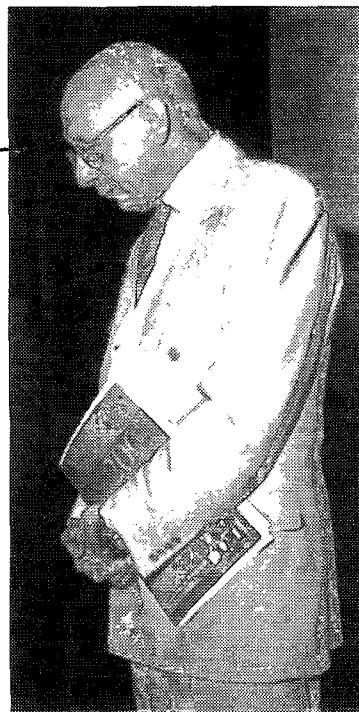
That "situation" is one where Arafat can easily manipulate money and political figures to his liking. It is also one where the public can appeal for change, but the ultimate arbiter is only Arafat.

Such a dissection of Arafat's leadership begs the question of whether the Palestinian leader is really interested in peace. Since the breakdown in Palestinian-Israeli relations, that has become a real question for Israelis. Palestinians, however, reject any doubts out of hand.

Arafat biographer Said Aburish, otherwise highly critical of the Palestinian leader, writes that Arafat made the strategic decision to move away from hijackings and other terror attacks as early as 1973. From then until the landmark 1988 Algiers declaration accepting the two-state solution, Arafat worked to consolidate both his power and support for a new path of negotiations. As remains his practice today, Arafat pushed through the unpopular decision via backroom negotiations. If anything, many Palestinians say, Arafat is too willing to compromise. Hussein's criticism was that he "loses sight of the big things for the details."

Most Israelis count it among Arafat's faults that he has continued to pursue a violent struggle against Israel alongside ongoing peace negotiations. For Palestinians, however, this is something that they admire. "For seven years, the Palestinian Authority was coordinating [with Israel] and imprisoning people [who opposed the accords], all because it said, 'We have a national enterprise, and we will not let anyone obstruct it,' " observes Palestinian university official Albert Aghazarian. In return, "they got the doubling population of the settlements, new bypass roads and the entrenchment of the occupation."

*Continued on next page*



British MP  
Gerald Kaufman

## A True Friend of Israel

*Veteran Labour Party MP Gerald Kaufman condemned Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in this speech before the British House of Commons on April 16.*

I became a friend of Israel when I was eight days old, and I have the scar to prove it.

The confrontation between Ariel Sharon's government and the Palestinian terrorists has become an international crisis, which, unless handled decisively, could create a dangerous wider conflict and disrupt the economies of the developed world. The suicide bombings organized by Palestinian terrorist groups are atrocities with which no civilized community can cope.

Earlier this month, an Israeli friend visited me here and told me that his trip was an escape from hell. He went back to hell. Last week, a suicide bomber blew himself up at the bus stop outside his kibbutz, where I have stayed many times, killing eight innocent people.

The deaths of hundreds of innocent Israelis are horrifying and have created an unus-

tainable atmosphere in Israel. The suicide bombers are mass murderers whose aim is to kill the maximum number of victims. Yet we need to ask ourselves why young Palestinians, men and women with their lives before them, decide to turn themselves into human bombs. We need to ask how we would feel if we had been occupied for 35 years by a foreign power that denied us the most elementary human rights and decent living conditions. We need to ask what the Jews did in comparable circumstances. In 1946, the Irgun, controlled by Menachem Begin, who later became Israeli prime minister, blew up the King David hotel in Jerusalem, slaughtering 91 innocent people, 17 of them fellow Jews.

Ariel Sharon responds to the suicide bombers by using the full force of the Israeli

army. He is having absolutely no effect in ending the terrorist acts. The suicide bombings and the slaughter of Jewish innocents continue and, as Colin Powell said while in Israel, will go on—not only regardless of what Sharon's army does, but impelled by what it does. We have now witnessed the full impact of the Israeli assault

on the Palestinians. We have seen what happened in Jenin.

In 1948, the Palestinians denounced what they described as a massacre in the village of Deir Yassin. It was denied that there was such a massacre, but it was later officially established by the incoming Israeli government that [more than 100] Palestinians had been murdered wantonly by Begin's Irgun and the Stern gang, led by Yitzhak Shamir—later, like Begin and Sharon, a Likud prime minister.

*Continued on next page*

## Kaufman *Continued from previous page*

The difference between the Deir Yassin massacre and what happened in Jenin is that Deir Yassin was the work of terrorist groups denounced by mainstream Jewish organizations, whereas the horrors in Jenin were carried out by the official Israeli army.

In 1901, Henry Campbell-Bannerman asked, "When is a war not a war?" Talking about the British government and the Boer war, his answer was, "When it is carried on by methods of barbarism." Sharon has ordered his troops to use methods of barbarism against the Palestinians. Two thousand years ago, Tacitus said, "They made a desert and called it peace." That is a precise description of Sharon's actions.

It is time to remind Sharon that the Star of David belongs to all Jews, not to his repulsive government. His actions are staining the Star of David with blood. The Jewish people ... are now symbolized throughout the world by the blustering bully Ariel Sharon, a war criminal implicated in the murder of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila camps and now involved in killing Palestinians once again.

Sharon is not simply a war criminal; he is a fool. He says that Jerusalem must never

again be divided, yet it is divided in a way that it has not been for 35 years. ... The state of Israel was founded so that Jews would no longer be penned up in ghettos. Now the state of Israel is a ghetto: an international pariah.

Sharon has reduced Israel's economy to its worst state for nearly half a century. As a consequence of his policies, more innocent Israelis have been killed by terrorists than for decades. More Israeli soldiers are being killed than at any time since Sharon tricked Begin into invading Lebanon 20 years ago. Sharon has rehabilitated Yasser Arafat, who had become sidelined and discredited and is now a Palestinian icon. The U.S. secretary of state waited on Arafat in Ramallah like a petitioner. If Sharon succeeds in exiling him, Arafat will be welcomed throughout the world as a spokesman for the oppressed Palestinian people.

Sharon's most dangerous enemy is Iraq. Although I ardently wish for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, I have my doubts about taking action against him now because the confusion in American policy makes success extremely unlikely. ...

It is time for the United States to take action. Sharon must make a full withdrawal from Palestinian territories. If he does not, economic sanctions and an arms ban must be imposed. In [the '50s] President Eisenhower ordered the Israelis to withdraw from Sinai, which was occupied during the Suez war, and the Israelis, under a sensible Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, complied.

In 1991, when the Israeli prime minister, former terrorist and assassin Yitzhak Shamir refused to participate in peace talks in Madrid, President Bush [withheld] \$10 billion in loan guarantees from the Israeli government, and Shamir turned up in Madrid. President George W. Bush told the Israelis to withdraw from the Palestinian territories. Instead, Sharon has stepped up his aggression. Jenin has happened since Bush's call for withdrawal. ...

[Tony Blair] is an internationally respected statesman. He must use his influence with the United States—the special relationship—so that Bush speedily compels Sharon to return Israel to the international community. No alternative is acceptable. If it does not happen, the outlook for us all is bleak. ■

## Arafat *Continued from previous page*

In the face of that, Palestinians almost all agree that Arafat had no choice but to pick up a gun. "I understand him," says PLO Executive Committee member Hanna Amirah. "He cannot put all the eggs in one place. The Israelis are not going to comply with international resolutions. They are not such a sweet enemy that we should say, everything is all right and we will negotiate. ... It's not like that. They have the upper hand in this."

Palestinian analyst Ali Jarbawi wrote once that Arafat has always pursued three goals: his own survival, the survival of the Palestinian national cause and the desire to leave something concrete behind him. The latest breakdown has stymied all three, but as Arafat emerges from isolation, his focus has been on gambling to create his legacy. "Let us complete [the] peace of the brave," Arafat told ABC News recently. "Not only for the Palestinians—for the Palestinians, for the Israelis, for the whole Middle East. And I am ready. The most important thing is not myself, [it is] my people, my cause."

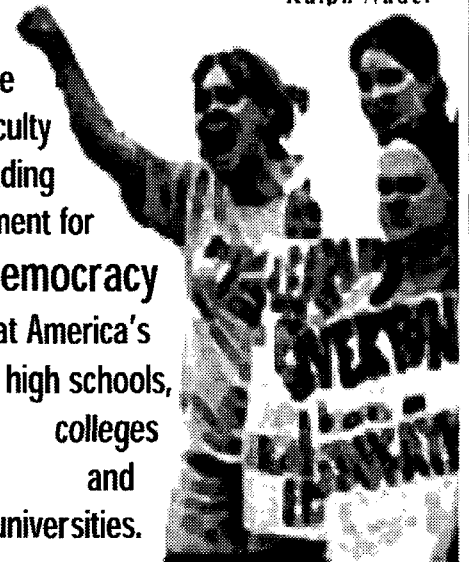
As such, Jarbawi says that all Arafat needs is an out—a concrete recognition of Palestinian rights and claims. "Arafat is trying to use all his tactical talents in maneuvering with Sharon to get out of the present crisis. But the situation, internally, regionally and worldwide, does not leave him much leeway. What is required of him exceeds the limits of his pragmatism and his ability to justify compromise."

As such, Arafat has come back to defending, not the last of his three strategic components, but the first—his own leadership. It is a battle that will determine his own fate, and therefore, the future of the Palestinian cause. ■

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# UNILATERAL MOVES

By Ian Williams

**W**ithout the fanfare that accompanied the campaign in the mountains of Afghanistan, the Bush administration has quietly begun a long march through multilateral institutions. At the United Nations and elsewhere, Washington has mounted a campaign to purge international civil servants judged to be out of step with the war on terrorism and the administration's insistence on having the last word in all global governance issues.

The right has long had a reflex hostility to international and multilateral organizations. But during the Reagan administration—the first time that the right exercised such control over U.S. policy—the right feared that the United States could not pull out of the United Nations and leave it in the hands the Soviets. Today, Washington has no counterweight at the United Nations, and Bush officials are unabashedly insisting on exercising the influence that comes from being the world's only superpower. Seizing upon its indispensability in this unipolar world, the Bush team is playing hardball—threatening to render the multilateral organization impotent unless it gets its way.

The first and most prominent target was Mary Robinson, the former Irish president, whose work as U.N. high commissioner for human rights has been acclaimed by human rights groups across the world. Officially, she retired after a one-year renewal of her contract. In fact, the United States ferociously lobbied against her reappointment. U.N. officials and Western diplomats also said she was “difficult to work with”—the usual euphemism for not taking dictation. Washington could not tolerate her stands on the Middle East or her endorsement of the results of the U.N. Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, which both the United States and Israel walked out of in protest.

The next victim of the U.S. campaign was Robert Watson, the respected chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). On April 19, the Bush administration succeeded in replacing him with Rajendra Pachauri, an Indian economist. The panel is (or perhaps *was* is the correct tense) an independent scientific body established to assess the impact of global warming. The panel's work had come to a consensus, not shared by the White House, that human activity is a factor in climate change.

According to a leaked memo, in February 2001, ExxonMobil had asked the Bush administration, “Can Watson be replaced now at the request of the U.S.?” The memo goes on to recommend that the administration “restructure the U.S. attendance at upcoming IPCC meetings to assure none of the Clinton/Gore proponents are involved in any decisional activities.” Apparently, the administration heeded ExxonMobil's wishes. Pachauri himself attributes his selection to being the candidate of the developing world, but environmental NGOs ascribe it to U.S. lobbying.



**A** few days later, on April 22, U.S. hawks succeeded in deposing Jose Mauricio Bustani, head of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), an agency created as part of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The agency arranges regular inspections of member countries' facilities to ensure that no one is cheating. Bustani, a Brazilian, has headed it from its creation five years ago, and his inspectors have carried out 1,100 inspections in more than 50 nations. In that time, the OPCW has overseen the destruction of 2 million chemical weapons and two-thirds of the world's chemical weapons facilities.

But since the beginning of the year, the United States has treated Bustani as if he were some type of bureaucratic bin Laden. Bush administration officials accused him of “ongoing financial mismanagement, demoralization of the Technical Secretariat staff, and ill-considered initiatives.” Just last year, he was re-elected unanimously, with plaudits from Colin Powell. Moreover, his staff has pointed out that the organization's finances and management were controlled not by Bustani, but by a U.S. government appointee.

So what changed? Not Bustani, but Washington. His main persecutor was John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security. Bolton earned his right-wing credentials as the in-house U.N.-basher for the Heritage Foundation. But his anti-U.N. convictions have never stopped him from taking money from the organization. Most recently he served as assistant to former Secretary of State James Baker on the failed Western Sahara mission. And while arguing that the United States should abandon the United Nations, according to *The Nation*, Bolton simultaneously advised the Taiwanese government on how it could get in.

Although Bolton may have flexible principles, like many of Bush's hard-right entourage, he has a rigid line in grudges—and he soon developed a major one against Bustani. Bustani first started running into problems when he resisted American efforts to dictate the nationality of the OPCW inspectors assigned to investigate American facilities. What's more, he had opposed a U.S. law allowing the president to block unannounced inspections in the United States and banning OPCW inspectors from removing samples of its chemicals. But diplomats suggest that Bustani's biggest "crime" was trying to persuade Iraq to sign the chemical weapons convention. The hawks in the administration resented these "ill-considered initiatives." If Iraq were to sign the convention and allow U.N. inspectors, it would deprive Washington of a quasi-legal justification for military action against Baghdad.

Earlier this year, the Bush administration asked Brazil to recall Bustani—but he was elected and not a Brazilian appointee. Then Bolton personally asked Bustani to resign. When he refused, the United States attempted to have the OPCW Executive Council sack him. Failing that, Washington called for a special session of member states to fire him, threatening that the United States would not pay its dues if he were reappointed. Faced with losing an effective and popular disarmament agency, a majority of states succumbed to this blackmail.

In the end, it seems most members of the OPCW, with varying degrees of pragmatism and reluctance, decided that the survival of one of the most successful disarmament organizations was more important than the fate of its director. But they set an ominous example. As Bustani presciently told the kangaroo court: "By dismissing me ... an international precedent will have been established whereby any duly elected head of any international organization would at any point during his or her tenure remain vulnerable to the whims of one or a few major contributors. They would be in a position to remove any director-general, or secretary-general, from office at any point in time."

**W**ho is the next target? It may be Hans Blix, who heads UNMOVIC, the U.N. organization established at the end of the Gulf War to inspect Iraqi arms facilities. It has been reported that Paul Wolfowitz, undersecretary of defense, ordered a CIA investigation of Blix. The administration is concerned that if Blix's team goes into Iraq and gives the regime a clean bill of health, it would undermine the sanctions against Iraq. For Wolfowitz and other hard-liners, this eventuality would remove another *causis belli* against Baghdad. Deposing the highly respected Blix, who formerly headed the International Atomic Energy Authority, would facilitate the administration's case for launching a war against Saddam Hussein.

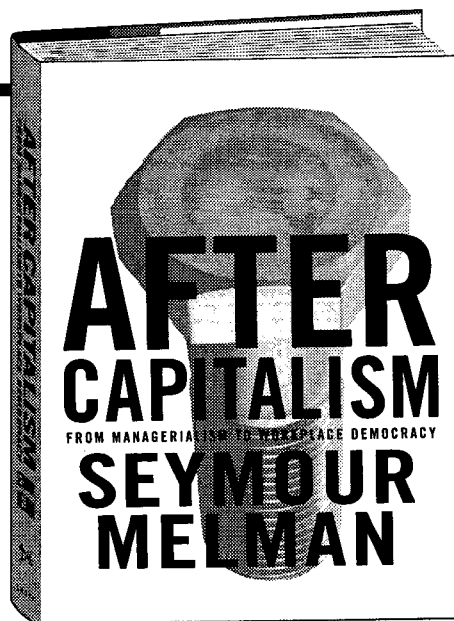
Others likely to be on the administration's hit list include the individuals on the proposed fact-finding mission to Jenin. Mary Robinson has already been ousted. Next may be Terje Roed Larsen, one of the main agents in establishing the Oslo meetings that led to what was once the peace process and who is currently a U.N. special coordinator. Although half-heartedly defended by Shimon Peres, it will be difficult to keep Larsen in position when he has "lost the trust" of Sharon and presumably his allies in the U.S. administration.

The third person regarded as biased against Israel is Peter Hansen, the recently reappointed commissioner general of UNRWA, the U.S.-funded agency that helps Palestinian refugees. Hansen was appointed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who angrily sprang to the defense of all three individuals criticized by Israel. But Annan may find it hard to stand behind his man, especially if Washington threatens to cut off its funding of UNRWA, which would likely cause starvation in the Palestinian refugee camps.

Annan himself has recently expressed public exasperation with Sharon. Given the recent pattern of arrogant American diplomacy, one cannot help but suspect that, but for Powell—who has a strong rapport with the secretary-general—the anti-Iraq and pro-Sharon hard-liners in the Bush administration will soon begin encouraging Annan to take an honorable, early retirement. If that strategy doesn't work, expect them to accuse him of managerial incompetence and inability to work well with member states, combined with yet another threat to withhold dues.

Perhaps at that point other U.N. member nations may regret their pandering to Washington, as they watch the entire post-World War II framework of multilateralism melt away. ■

*Ian Williams is the U.N. correspondent for The Nation and author of The U.N. for Beginners.*



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# Abuse *Inside* the Razor Wire



By **Arthur Candell**

**F**ranc Valdes died from severe trauma. His collarbone, nose, shoulder and 22 ribs were broken. His scrotum was bruised and had swollen to the size of an orange. He had facial fractures and cuts to his liver and intestines, bruises to his heart and internal organs and deep muscle hemorrhages. A severe bruise to his right side bore the imprint of a boot.

The 36-year-old Valdes was found dead on the floor of his one-man cell in "X-wing," the Death Row of Florida State Prison at Starke on July 17, 1999. Probably the most hated prisoner on Death Row, Valdes was awaiting execution for shooting and killing a prison guard in 1987. Only prison guards had access to his cell.

Reports filed by guards at the prison claimed that Valdes self-inflicted his grievous injuries by throwing himself on the floor of his cell and banging his head into the bars. But following an investigation, five Florida State Prison guards were arrested and charged with murdering Valdes. Their trials galvanized the Florida media and briefly shone a rare spotlight on the heinous abuse inflicted on inmates across the country.

What makes the Valdes case exceptional is not just the severity of the beating, but that anyone outside the prison ever heard about it. Prison activists claim that only about 1 percent of the abuse inflicted by prison and jail guards on inmates ever reaches the attention of the public. Numerous laws and regulations effectively deny prisoners access to the courts to challenge any kind of abuse. Fear of retribution among inmates if they report excessive use of force on themselves or others, and the intimidation of guards by their peers and superiors, keep these episodes within the walls.

**B**ut whistleblowers occasionally do bring harrowing stories to the public view. A few examples:

○ In Pennsylvania, Jere Krakoff of the ACLU's National Prison Project received more than 30 letters from inmates at the Greene State Correctional Institute complaining about mistreatment by guards. Former corrections counselor Bob DeBord quit his job at Greene because he could not stomach what was going on there. DeBord reported seeing a prisoner

with bruises all over his body after being taken from solitary confinement. "I went to see him, as he was obviously hurt," said DeBord, who questioned the guard. "But the guard said that he was 'belligerent.'"

○ In Hawaii, Dr. Terence B. Allen, head of the medical department at Halawa Correctional Center, resigned, saying the retaliation and harassment had so poisoned his work environment that he was unable to provide the quality of health care he felt inmates deserved. Allen, who was with the Hawaii prison system for eight years, reported numerous incidents of inmate abuse that all were ignored by prison officials. Allen went public after he treated high-security inmate Ulysses Kim for wounds caused by excessive restraints and trauma from beatings.

○ At Corcoran State Prison in California, more than 40 inmates were shot by officers from 1989 to 1995; seven inmates were killed. The FBI was called in to investigate when the California Department of Corrections found all the abuse allegations groundless. In 2000, eight Corcoran officers were indicted for arranging prison fights for recreation. Not one top administrator was charged.

○ The Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit against the Arizona Department of Corrections, alleging that prison officials deliberately ignored female inmates' claims of being raped by guards and staff. The suit also alleges that female inmates were subject to invasion of privacy, including being viewed by male officers while showering and using the toilet. A similar lawsuit has been filed in Michigan. And accusations of prison staff preying on female inmates have surfaced everywhere from Washington State to Washington, D.C.

○ In Georgia, inmates have long complained of guards' brutality, and a few guards, counselors and other prison employees finally have stepped forward to support their claims. Prisoners at Hays State Prison in northwestern Georgia alleged that a top aide to prison commissioner Wayne Garner touched off a bloody attack on prisoners when he grabbed an unresisting inmate by the hair and dragged him across the floor. The same day, the commissioner himself, in another cell block, watched as some handcuffed inmates were punched, stomped and kicked, until blood streaked the walls.

Guards enjoyed a celebratory chicken dinner the next day. "Everybody was high-fiving and shaking hands and congratulat-

ing each other and patting each other on the back and bragging about how much butt [Garner] kicked," testified Lt. Ray McWhorter, who was in charge of the prison's riot squad, in a deposition as part of a federal lawsuit brought by state inmates against the commissioner and others. The commissioner was "clearly involved in inciting this," adds Stephen Bright, director of the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, which represented the inmates. "It's not unusual to have inmates telling you that these things happen. What's remarkable is the verification from the guards."

**B**ut Florida's heinous record of abusing inmates stands out. Three guards at the Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello received "official reprimands" for their part in contributing to the suicide of inmate Florence Krell. She had unsuccessfully filed complaints that guards stripped her naked and left her handcuffed in solitary confinement for days after turning off her water supply. A captain and two guards were arrested and booked in Columbia County for assaulting prisoner Vincent Chester and so damaging his right testicle that it had to be removed. An Osceola County jail nurse, Shelley DePaz, testified that jail guard Greg Wilson twisted a towel around the neck of prisoner Daniel Sagers, choking and brutally beating him, resulting in Sager's death seven days later. Sagers' family has filed a \$20 million lawsuit against the county.

In another Florida prison, the Charlotte Correctional Institute, federal and state prosecutors indicted seven guards on charges they brutally beat and tortured prisoner John Edwards, who was serving a life sentence for murder. Witnesses came forth and testified that before Edwards took his own life by slitting his wrists, he had been beaten by guards. An HIV-positive prisoner, Edwards had bitten a guard and then taunted him that he would get AIDS. The witnesses, prison employees, testified that they watched as their supervisor pulled hair out of Edward's chest as he laid strapped to a steel bunk, bleeding profusely.

In that case, as in most cases involving violent guards, prosecutors had a wealth of evidence—three guards who were eyewitnesses and medical photographs matching the guards' testimony. But all seven were acquitted, says federal prosecutor Doug Malloy, "because after the jury heard all about the

crimes that put Edwards in prison, and his demonization by the defense team, they didn't see him as a victim."

**T**he lack of identification with the inmate is only one of the many difficulties involved in getting a conviction in a prison abuse case. In the murder of Frank Valdes, the crime scene had been scrubbed clean, and the officers had spent hours alone together before investigators arrived. But after an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which looks into all suspicious prison deaths, state prosecutors decided they had enough evidence to proceed to trial.

The other guards incriminated Sgt. Montrez Lucas, the commanding officer at the time, as the prime instigator of the assault and the one who administered most of the fatal beating. The *St. Petersburg Times* reported that Lucas had taught classes of new corrections officers about using force on inmates, including tips on covering up evidence of abuse. Trainee Robin Rosier told the newspaper that Lucas had instructed them: "Go in, cuff the inmate up, take turns hitting him, kicking him ... then basically take him to medical. Medical would not see anything that would indicate the excessive use of force. But when the inmate would make it back to his cell, that's when [the guards] would finish the job."

Lucas' murder trial started in October 2000 in Starke, the Bradford County seat, where nearly everyone works for or has relatives who work for one of the county's three correctional facilities. Despite overwhelming evidence pointing to Lucas



## Background Check

**S**tate corrections departments find it difficult to recruit guards, at a starting salary around \$23,000 a year, especially in times of low unemployment. With chronic shortages and huge turnover, prescribed standards are not only relaxed, but usually ignored. Many guards do not hold a high school diploma.

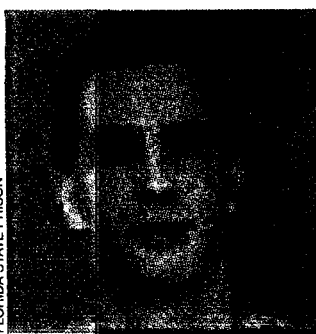
In Florida, according to *The St. Petersburg Times*, one in six guards have criminal backgrounds. A background check at Florida State Prison revealed in 1999 that out of 511 guards employed there, 89 have arrest records, 11 faced court-ordered punishment for violent crimes and two are repeat offenders.

But unlike other state law enforcement agencies, the Florida Department of Corrections does not require polygraph or psychological tests to weed out undesirables. Florida correctional statistics show that 1,560 of Florida's nearly 16,000 guards have been

charged with a crime in the past five years. During the past two years, more than 750 officers were brought up on disciplinary charges ranging from sexual abuse to using excessive force. These statistics are echoed throughout the country.

—A.C.





LEFT: Frank Valdes, the most hated man on Death Row.  
OPPOSITE PAGE: Prison guard Charles Brown is arrested for the murder of Valdes.

and the reluctant but incriminating testimony of other guards and Death Row inmates, the jury found Lucas innocent of all charges.

The second murder trial of three officers—Timothy Thorton, Charles Brown and Jason Griffis (charges against a fourth officer, Robert Sauls, were reduced when he agreed to cooperate with the prosecutors)—endured a three-month jury selection process, eliminating some 2,700 candidates for their connection to the prison system. The judge repeatedly rejected the prosecution's request for a change of venue, before they settled on six Bradford County residents (five of whom had relatives or friends who work in law enforcement or the prison system). After a month-long trial that included testimony from more than 50 witnesses, the jury took just three and a half hours to acquit all three men in February 2002.

While the trial left little doubt that Valdes was beaten to death, the prosecution failed to convince the jury that the individual defendants were responsible. "Realistically, I think we've shown that Valdes was murdered at Florida State Prison," prosecutor Greg McMahon told the *St. Petersburg Times* after the verdict. "Whether that means anything without saying someone's responsible, I'm not sure."

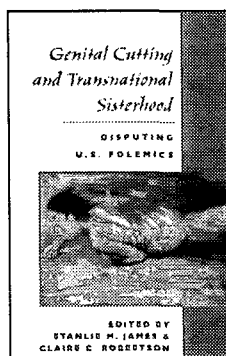
Now the prosecution must decide whether to prosecute three other guards and Lucas, who faces a new set of charges. Meanwhile, the Justice Department said in late February that they would conduct a federal civil rights review of the case, and the acquitted guards could still face further charges. But the two acquittals—and the enormous publicity generated by the trials—would make the prosecutors' burden even more difficult. Meanwhile Valdes' father and his ex-wife have filed a multimillion-dollar civil lawsuit against the Florida Department of Corrections.

For its part, the Department of Corrections considers the Valdes case an "aberration." Since the Valdes trials, some policies have been changed. Instead of force, for example, guards are being encouraged to use pepper spray and other painful chemicals to subdue prisoners. Critics complain that such a substitution does nothing to address the real problems. Video cameras also have been installed in Florida State Prison's "X Wing," though not in many of the other wings of the prison. Videotaping is now required when force is used to subdue a prisoner, but not when chemicals are.

Though complaints from inmates have increased since the trials, very little has changed. Fear and retribution still rule inside the razor wire. "Somebody clearly beat [Valdes] to death," says attorney and prisoner advocate Lisa Shirley White, "and the guards were the only ones with access to his cell. If they are not convicted in his death, it's just going to reinforce the idea among prison guards that they can get away with anything." ■

Arthur Candell is an investigative reporter residing in Florida. For 15 years, he was Caribbean correspondent for several wire services and newsmagazines. Research support for this report was provided by the Dick Goldensohn Fund for Journalists. Additional research by Kate Krepel.

## 'Why' and 'Why Not?'



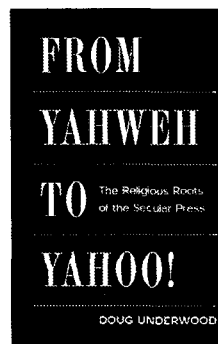
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# History We Can Use

By Kim Phillips-Fein

As Alfred O. Hirschman notes in his short book on the “rhetoric of reaction,” conservative polemics against radical politics have traded on sly irony ever since the

## Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000

By Geoff Eley

Oxford University Press

698 pages, \$35

French Revolution. The left, according to the prophets of the anti-Enlightenment, not only fails, it ties itself in paradox—creating tyranny while promising utopia, awakening hopes of a new world but then failing to change anything at all.

The tired revolutionary and German playwright Buchner wrote in the aftermath of Thermidor that revolutions were like Saturn, “devouring their own children.” Alexis de Tocqueville quietly deflated the Jacobins after his own disillusionment in the failed revolutions of 1848, sighing that history would have moved the same way had the Bastille never burned.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama—in whom Nietzsche and Hegel met the Rand Corporation—interrogated the end of history, while blood-sniffing pedants compiled Communism’s Black Book. Even socialists themselves have often described their politics as one of perennial contradiction and loss. Not long after his conversion from romantic to revolutionary, William Morris wrote in *The Diary of John Ball* of “how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.”

This tragic sensibility, the poetry of radical defeat, differs sharply in tone from the free-market utopian narratives

of inevitable progress. From the modernization theorists of the 1950s to today’s tribunes of globalization like Thomas Friedman, these Panglossians tell a story of the parallel expansion of markets and democratic freedoms. Capitalism and democracy go hand in hand because private enterprise cannot function without the rule of law; free individuals will inevitably seek self-government; a system of economic deregulation cannot co-exist with political regulation.

Either way, conservatives gaze with approval on the slow evolution of the

handed down from elites, nor did businessmen bring it to their workers. Instead, Eley writes, “The most important gains for democracy have only ever been attained through revolution.” Eley shows that revolutionary socialists were the strongest—and sometimes the only—champions of democracy in Europe. There would be, he argues, no liberalism without socialism. *Forging Democracy* covers most of Europe and one and a half centuries, and writing it took 20 years. But it seems fitting that it appears now, when anti-globalization and the rebirth of the labor movement are sweeping new generations of people into politics, for it is a history of the left that we can use.

In her book *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt tells a story about the first appearance of the idea of political revolution. When Louis XVI heard of the storming of the Bastille, he turned to a consort and asked, “Is it a revolt?” The servant—possessing a subaltern’s sense for the world-historic—responded, “No, sire, it is a revolution.” The political movement for democracy in Western Europe was born during this moment of revolution, when the first “left”

demanding abolition of the king’s veto, a single-chamber legislature and legislative supremacy, and, most of all, the democratic franchise. From the beginning, democracy was confrontational. Even the revolutionary trinity—“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”—linked three virtues with little in common except for their implied criticism of the Old Regime.

The title of *Forging Democracy* refers not just to the struggle of the left for democratic government, but to the political institution invented in the mid-19th century to represent the working class: social-democratic political parties. For Eley, the mass political party, democratically accountable to its membership, devoted to



Poster for the Third Communist International, 1920.

world, believing that the expansion of free markets means the rise of liberty. For them, socialists are ideologues and conformists, breeding repression and political suffocation, from the Luddites to the anti-globalization activists, the Puritans to the Soviets.

Historian Geoff Eley’s *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*, breaks with both radical pessimism and conservative placidity. Eley, a professor at the University of Michigan and a self-described “child of the British welfare state,” has written a history of the left that is a narrative of success, not failure. For the socialist movement brought democracy to Europe; popular government was not



using the state to help the working class, is the crucial innovation of the left. These labor parties were born only in the wake of the failed revolutions of 1848. Prior to the "springtime of peoples," radical politics had no institutions that sought to link the diffuse strands of the working class to a leadership capable of articulating and representing its interests.

Utopian socialists like the clerk Charles Fourier and industrialist Robert Owen sketched the architecture of justice and grace, but they commanded no political forces. (Fourier was reduced to advertising for wealthy donors, patiently waiting at home from 12 to 4 each day for them to show up. None ever did.) During the most repressive years of the Restoration, closet revolutionaries like Augustus Blanqui preached a theory of conspiracy, arguing that the revolution would happen when a virtuous radical elite sprang up to lead spontaneous mass insurrection. Neither the Blanquists nor the utopian socialists had much use for the institutions of modern political movements—parliaments, elections, mass organizations. Instead, they believed in a natural harmony between the leaders and the led.

But the limitations of 1848 made it clear that people needed to be organized before the revolutionary moment; lying in wait for the bonfire of rebellion was only a fantasy of change. In the second half of the 19th century, radical activists began to believe that the rise of the working class as a political force demanded the creation of democratic institutions. They saw a symbiotic relationship between socialism and democracy. Liberals wanted to restrict the franchise to a propertied elite, while businessmen saw the repression of popular politics as a spur to economic growth.

In contrast, for workers without property, collective action—and hence the rights of suffrage, speech and assembly—was the only way to exercise social power. Socialists, not liberals, fought for free speech and association—and not for abstract reasons, but because repressive legislation (like Germany's 1878 Anti-Socialist law) was passed primarily to hem in the left. At the same time, the methods of the left—strikes and protests, as much as the transcendent vision of a just world—were needed to win victories that might seem to be entirely within the liberal consensus: the right to organize, the vote, the eight-hour day.

One might imagine that Eley's description of the relationship between socialism and democracy would be harder to sustain in the 20th century, against the backdrop of the Soviet purges. But while Eley is critical of the Soviet Union and its end in Stalinism, he also sees the ways that Communism continued to be part of the struggle for democracy in Western Europe. The socialist movement prior to World War I had been dogmatically materialist, using a rigid Marxist optimism about the

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**"The most important gains for democracy have only ever been attained through revolution."**

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inevitability of revolution to justify parliamentary politics against radical complaints. By contrast, forcing revolution in a peasant country where no schema predicted it, the Bolsheviks (to quote Antonio Gramsci) made "man the dominant factor in history, not raw economic facts. ... The revolutionaries themselves will create the conditions needed for the total achievement of their goal."

Even though the Bolshevik revolution disappointed Lenin and Trotsky by failing to topple European governments, it inspired mass strikes and revolutionary experiments—like the Occupation of the Factories in Italy and council communism in Germany—throughout the continent. The "fear of Bolshevism" also weakened the longstanding resistance of the Old Regime to the expansion of liberal rights and welfare provisions. In Germany, the franchise became universal (for men); in Austria, Red Vienna, run by non-Bolshevik socialists, housed hundreds of thousands in newly constructed public apartments.

The complex relationship between Western social democracy and the Soviet Union persisted through the middle years of the 20th century. At the height of Stalinist repression, the Popular Front mobilized against fascism, and during the war, Communists were at the center of the Resistance. The result was a new political legitimacy for the left in the postwar period, when Communist parties polled more than 25 percent of the vote in France, and hit

double digits in many other countries. The new constitutions that progressive coalitions and labor parties helped pass ended monarchy in Italy, enfranchised women in France, and—in several countries—instituted land reform, national health insurance and public ownership of corporations.

Just as the revolutionary tradition helped create the conditions for the rise of European social democracy, the fall of the radical left helped to force labor-driven politics into retreat. After Khrushchev's revelations in 1956, hundreds of thousands defected from the Communist parties, and still more abandoned the faith after 1968, when orthodox Communists joined forces with Europe's establishment to beat back the student-led upheavals. The atrophy of the parties that had once provided the foot soldiers of the revolution helped speed the implosion of mainstream social democratic politics, while the decline of socialism lent weight to Margaret Thatcher's proclamation that there were no alternatives.

But beyond its impact on parliamentary politics, the socialist movement, Eley writes, helped to breathe life into all kinds of radical movements for change. Despite a long history of tension with the orthodox left, feminism and gay rights—assaults on a different kind of Old Regime—are ultimately integrally related to the socialist tradition. They draw upon what he calls "socialist values" of "collectivism, social justice and egalitarianism," even—in the case of feminism—borrowing from the theoretical model of Marxism, substituting women for the proletariat. Even the pro-democracy movements in Eastern Europe, especially Poland's union-based Solidarity, used socialist idealism to bring down the Soviet state, holding socialism's promises—the official goals of the state—up against the flat reality of daily life.

While *Forging Democracy* is a hopeful history, seeking to rescue radicalism from snide condescension, the book still bears the marks of 20 years of timidity and despair. The idea that the end goal of politics is not revolution, but reform, has been heard before, in the early years of the 20th century. Then, its proponent was Eduard Bernstein, who wrote on behalf of the reformist wing of the Second International. In 1899, Bernstein suggested that the pressure the radical movement places on existing politics itself is the

end goal of political struggle: "The final goal, no matter what it is, is nothing; the movement is everything."

Rosa Luxemburg was a young Socialist émigré, just finished with her dissertation, when she wrote "Reform and Revolution," her famous attack on Bernstein, which established her as one of the leading radicals within the German Social Democratic Party. In it, she wrote that social reforms were not opposed to revolution; they were essential to political mobilization in the present, gave people a taste of power and helped them to start believing in their own capacity to affect change.

But at the same time, the slow accumulation of reforms was qualitatively dif-

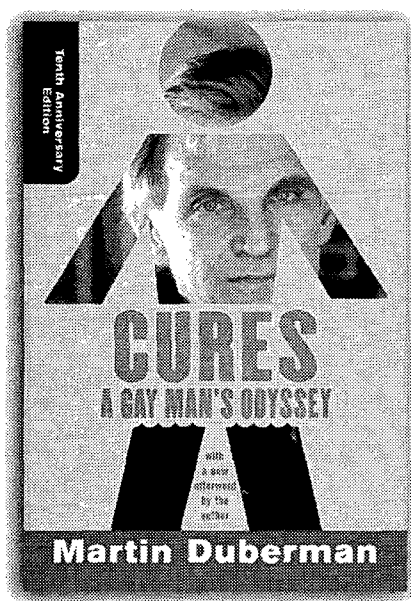
ferent from revolution. For, in time, conflicts emerge between the movement for reform, however moderate, and the pressures of business, its drive for control. The minimum wage is undone by inflation; the progressive labor laws annulled by a change in administration; the hard-won gains on the shop floor reversed by a round of layoffs; freedom of assembly broken up by police batons.

It has never been easy to believe in revolution, but today it is perhaps even harder than it was in 1899. This is why many progressives—one imagines, Eley among them—long for social democracy without revolution, for a radical movement without end. They want to employ revolution pragmatically, as a necessary

goad to press more moderate reforms. Yet this is a stance one can maintain only as long as one is detached from politics. The more deeply engaged one becomes with political life—especially in a time of great social movements—the easier it is to believe in people's capacity to change the world. Truly important changes in the distribution of power, as Eley says, do not take place without "conflict, risk-taking and reckless exemplary acts, ethical witnessing, violent confrontation." The history of the erosion of social democracy in Europe and the New Deal in America over the past 30 years demonstrates that no matter how hard it may seem to believe in revolution, it is equally difficult over time to sustain faith in reform alone. ■

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# All Too Human

By Bill Boisvert

**T**he last man at the end of history is a tough act to follow. Unless, that is, you're a genetically enhanced clone of the last man. In that case, writes Francis Fukuyama in *Our Posthuman Future*, history will pass

## Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution

By Francis Fukuyama  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
256 pages, \$25

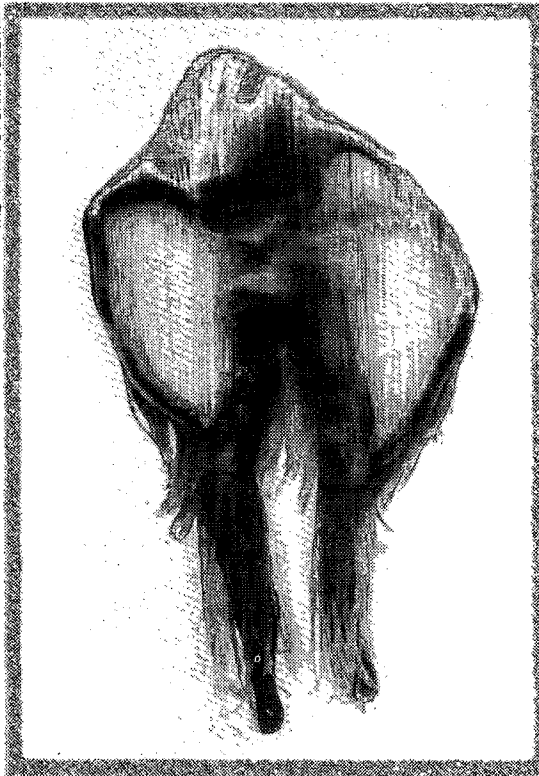
into your hands in the form of a *Brave New World*-style dystopia. In fact, he thinks that such a future is already upon us. Mood-altering drugs like Prozac and Ritalin are contemporary versions of soma, allowing (or forcing) us to conform to a social norm of vapid cheerfulness. And just around the corner are genetic engineering techniques that will let the wealthy confer genes for beauty and IQ on their designer babies. If biotechnology proceeds unchecked, Fukuyama asserts, society will become a hereditary hierarchy of Alpha planners and Epsilon drones.

In *The End of History and the Last Man*, his controversial 1992 retrospective on the fall of Communism, Fukuyama framed history as a Hegelian dialectic culminating in liberal democracy. Biotechnology, he now argues, threatens to undo that synthesis. It will inaugurate a "kinder, gentler eugenics," working insidiously through consumer choice rather than government diktat, imposing a relentlessly utilitarian view of human nature under the guise of therapy and self-enhancement. It will open up new methods of social engineering that impose a numbing psychological conformity, while it lets elites embed their privileges in their germ-line and perhaps even secede from the species. The genetically enhanced will come to think of themselves as natural aristocrats, while the underprivileged, pacified

by therapeutic neuropharmaceuticals, will accept subordination and narrowed horizons as the inescapable lot of inferior DNA. We will lose fraternity, and with it liberty and equality.

Anxieties about superviruses and toxic GM foods are widespread, as is the "untutored repugnance," in the words of bioethicist Leon Kass, that many feel toward transgenic chimeras, octuplet tragedies and other excesses of reproductive technology. Fukuyama is less concerned about the palpably terrifying and nauseating aspects of biotechnology, which he feels are easily foreseen and headed off, than with the subtler political, social and spiritual pitfalls. He fears that in tinkering with the human frame

THE FATHER BY DANITA GELTNER



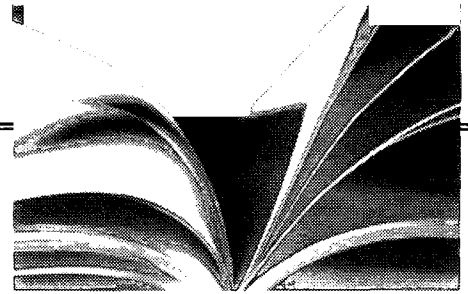
we will lose the human essence. He raises important, if not exactly novel, issues.

But Fukuyama's focus is off, because biotechnology is more a symptom than an instigator of the trends that worry him. It's

not an independent force, but a way for people to jockey for advantage in a society all too regimented and hierarchical in its own right. Fukuyama should go back to his Hegelian roots and ask whether the dialectic of history is really over, or whether there are still internal contradictions that drive modern society toward posthumanism. Why does liberal—especially American—society crave biotechnology? Why must we drug ourselves into happiness? Why do we feel that life is so Darwinian that only a genetic elite can get ahead?

**F**ukuyama's alarm about biotechnology is fed by a credulous acceptance of its claims. He takes it for granted that emotions boil down to neurotransmitter levels, that mood elevators are "far more effective than early childhood socialization and Freudian talk therapies" at forming personality, and that mental attributes like intelligence and competitiveness are amenable to genetic manipulation. He provides little scholarly backing for these dubious, HMO-inspired claims and never manages to reconcile their inconsistencies.

He doesn't notice, for example, that his neuropharmacological zombie scenario is incompatible with his genetically engineered master-race scenario. He writes with awe of the second-wave psychotropics to come: benzodiazepines that "reduce anxiety" and increase wakefulness, "acetylcholine system enhancers" that "improve factual recall" and "dopamine system enhancers" that "increase stamina and motivation." Although none of these drugs sound like they would add much to our current stash of gin, cigarettes, coffee and amphetamines, according to Fukuyama "virtually everything that the popular imagination envisions genetic engineering accomplishing is much more likely to be accomplished sooner through neuropharmacology." But that's good news—right?—



since it means the democratization of the benefits of gene privilege. Who needs designer genes when you can pop some cheap, mass-produced superiority pill?

Fukuyama is too busy forecasting civil war between genetic haves and have-nots to dwell on that contradiction. An even deeper one crops up when, inevitably, he invokes complexity theory. The “human essence,” or “Factor X,” as he dubs it, is an “emergent property” of the “complex adaptive system” that is the human genome, and so can’t be grokked by the reductionist methods of gene science. Complexity theory is always used to defend the holistic integrity of some big thing—a rain forest, say, or the stock market—that people don’t want touched. In such “non-linear” systems, small disturbances snowball into big ones, like the proverbial butterfly that sets off a hurricane. Stripped of the mystical verbiage, Fukuyama’s implication is that tweaking any part of the genome will have unintended consequences that shunt the human essence off on a radically different path to Factor Y.

That’s a good point, indeed a devastating one for Fukuyama’s thesis: For if the genome is an unfathomably complex and fragile ecology, then genetic engineering will never make much headway. A few simple single-gene traits may yield to it, but not complex and only tenuously “genetic” characteristics like memory or competitiveness, “enhancements” to which would probably give rise to psychotic freaks of science—people who can’t forget anything, or people who literally never give up.

The scientific incoherence of Fukuyama’s arguments is ultimately beside the point. *Our Posthuman Future* is about the discontents of liberal democracy. It is a revisiting of *The End of History*, substituting trendy biological determinism for stodgy German idealism. In the earlier book, the motor of progress is *thymos*—the human desire for recognition and dignity. The first man at the beginning of history was the warrior who gained recognition from slaves, a precursor of the feudal overlord and the Bolshevik commissar. Each such social arrangement collapsed because it thwarted the thymotic needs of the masses, until capitalist liberal democracy, by enshrining the autonomy and dignity of all citizens, resolved this internal contradiction and brought the dialectic of history to a close.

*Our Posthuman Future* translates this scheme into the supposedly clear-headed language of sociobiology. Thus, it is “the evolutionary theory of kin selection,” not Hegelian teleology, that “predict[s] the bankruptcy and ultimate failure of Communism.” *Thymos* turns out to be serotonin, which fuels the “struggle for status” within “dominance hierarchies” from chimpanzee troops to the Roman Empire. The advent of serotonin reuptake inhibitors therefore has world-

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## It’s no wonder that pop culture now views genetic engineering not as a nightmare scenario but as a ticket out of the rat race.

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historical reverberations: “Would Caesar or Napoleon have felt the need to conquer most of Europe if he had been able to pop a Prozac?”

In passages like this, Fukuyama’s worry seems to be that biotechnology is not the bane but the fulfillment of liberalism—therapeutic, ameliorative and non-heroic, promising “relief from pain and suffering” at the expense of the “genius or ambition” that drives men of destiny. Like liberal democracy, biotechnology will bring the zeitgeist to a permanent halt—and that troubles Fukuyama. He can’t decide whether he wants history to end or not.

His ambivalence goes back to *The End of History*, where he acknowledged some misgivings about the liberal order. The left critique—that the inequalities of capitalism make a mockery of liberalism’s pretense of universal human dignity—he largely dismissed. The Nietzschean critique—that liberal democracy is a gray bourgeois mediocrity against which the great-souled *Übermensch* must rebel—he took very seriously. Many of *Our Posthuman Future*’s complaints, about society’s decrepitude and the unnatural confusion of feminine and masculine, have a Nietzschean ring to them.

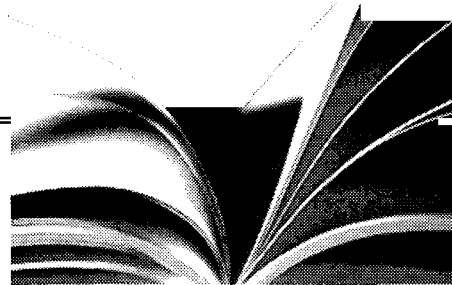
Prozac, for example, gives depressed women “more of that alpha-male feeling that comes with high serotonin,” while Ritalin makes boys sit still in class as if

they were girls. “Together, the two sexes are gently nudged toward that androgynous median personality, self-satisfied and socially compliant, that is the current politically correct outcome.” And life-extending medical treatments threaten to turn society into a “giant nursing home” where the young cater to a senile and, because women outlive men, effeminate gerontocracy, thus sapping our national vigor: “The world may well be divided between a North whose political tone is set by elderly women and a South driven by ... super-empowered angry young men.”

But Fukuyama finally breaks with Nietzsche and with what he sees as the nihilistic thrust of biotechnology, especially human germ-line engineering. Implicit in that project, he feels, is the idea that human nature is open-ended, that there is in fact no such thing as human nature other than a will-to-power that tries to accrue ever more capabilities by re-engineering—or even by “downloading” consciousness into computers, obliterating the biological underpinnings of human life. Fukuyama rejects this conceit, arguing that our capacity for language, reason, moral intuitions and sociability are all to some extent hardwired into our brains by evolution. Human nature, grounded in our genome, is what makes possible human values.

Fukuyama’s discussion of these issues is insightful, although marred by woolly scientific conceits. The real point of all the complexity gobbledygook is to impart an acceptable secular veneer to a philosophical, ultimately religious notion—that the human germ line, i.e. human nature, is sacred and untouchable, to be revered for its own sake, not tampered with and exploited for instrumental purposes. For if human nature is dead, then all is permitted, and we might as well breed humans into functional castes, as long as everyone is kept high on serotonin.

Science cannot demonstrate this proposition, nor solve the mystery of Factor X. But Fukuyama is right in a crucial respect: A humane order depends on an idea of an innate human nature. Our impulses toward compassion, social soli-





darity and moral reciprocity all rest on the conviction that other people are fundamentally just like us, and so must be treated like us. Whatever the scientific basis for this belief, it's an article of faith that a just society can't do without.

But when we give up on human nature, it won't be because of biotechnology. Liberal society still offers up plenty of affronts to *thymos*—especially at the workplace, which looks more like a brave new world every day. Ritalin is there, after all, to keep us focused on mindless busywork, while Prozac, if you're a depressed female Enron accountant, lets you put a brave face on a business that you don't understand but which is probably fraudulent and definitely emptying out your 401(k). And where once we had occupations, mastered through training and practice, now we're either "knowledge workers" or "service workers," functionally mysterious castes that rely on interior personal essences, like IQ or servility.

It's no wonder then that popular culture now views genetic engineering not as a nightmare scenario but as a ticket out of the rat race. In movies and TV shows like *X-Men* and *Dark Angel*, transgenics get whisked off to elite private schools, where their capabilities are carefully nurtured. They graduate to become irreplaceable members of interdependent work teams, with unique specialties—kick-boxing, telepathy, breathing underwater, magnetizing nearby metals—that are hard to outsource or automate. They are labor aristocrats in a world where the next best thing is casual employment as a bicycle messenger.

So if we believe that genes outweigh environment, it's because we've grown disenchanted with the environment. We used to meet people, learn new ideas and gain practical experience, all from interacting with the environment. Nowadays the environment is for suckers. We're told that everything we learn today will be obsolete tomorrow. Entrance into college is based on your scholastic "aptitude," which is unaffected by whether you grew up in Beverly Hills or South Central. We live in a "winner-take-all society," so there's no longer a payoff to solidarity or mutual aid. When you reach your benefits cutoff, or your portfolio tanks, you have only your personal

responsibility to back you up. Genes didn't matter so much when we thought the environment provided skills and friends and social institutions we could count on to transform our life circumstances. Now we know better. The environment passeth away. Genes abide.

One wishes Fukuyama would probe these attitudes, instead of tacitly endorsing them and wringing his hands over the consequences. He ends his book with

a sensible call for thoroughgoing government regulation of biotechnology. But he should go further and look at the failure of Davos-stage liberal democracy to live up to the ideals he claims it embodies. Biotechnology hype simply mirrors a world that aggrandizes a Nietzschean few and humiliates millions. Unless we learn to treat people as ends and not means, the posthuman future will follow from an inhuman present. ■

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## Save the Children

By Richard Kim

In 1993, Diane Diamond's 8-year-old daughter Jessica reported to her teachers that her 9-year-old brother Tony "touched her front and back." Following guidelines established by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the school notified the state, and a social worker was soon knocking on Diane's door. Diane optimistically "poured out her family's history" (abusive ex-husband, past

Levine puts it in *Harmful to Minors*, "that once the narrative was inscribed—crazy mother makes boy a molester, victimizes girl—no alternative story could be told." The Diamonds, like many other ordinary families, got caught up in the "perpetual meaning machine ... of sexual abuse." Now Levine, a respected journalist and founding member of the National Writers Union, finds herself a target of the same machine. It's an irony I'm sure she does not appreciate.

*Harmful to Minors* is a sage, intelligent, industriously reported and eminently sane book. Its major arguments—that like other categories of life (art, education, politics or commerce), sex is not "ipso facto harmful to minors" and that "America's drive to protect kids from sex is protecting them from nothing ... instead it's often harming them"—ought to pass for common sense. But what Levine could not have anticipated was that her book would be released just as the decades-old, uniquely American sex panic would crest again—this time over pedophiles in the Catholic priesthood. *Harmful to Minors* was, for better or worse, caught in its wake.

Although it has generated an enormous buzz, this twist of timing is in many ways regrettable. For one thing, Levine spends relatively few pages on the topic of sex between minors and adults. Most of the book is dedicated to recounting how the right wing, through sham social science, media sensationalism and self-righteous congressional inquiries, convinced the mainstream that sex is by nature dangerous to children. When

### **Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex**

By Judith Levine

University of Minnesota Press

229 pages, \$25.95

problems with drugs and alcohol) with the hope that social services would help her find therapy for her depressed son.

Instead, Diane was deemed "incapable of protecting her daughter," while Tony was declared a "budding sex offender," a molester with a "sexual misconduct/abuser disorder," and both children were removed from Diane's custody. When Diane attempted to get her children back, when she protested the state's intrusive examinations and wild speculations, she only generated more fodder for their clinicians. Diane was accused of "having some sort of breakdown," of being "defensive and histrionic." Routine motherly affection became a sinister sign of deeper pathology: Diane, it was pointedly observed, "touched her children's knees and neck" and once "put her arm around Jessica's waist."

What Diane didn't know when she started telling her story was, as Judith



Levine does venture into the sex lives of children, she discusses an array of erotic acts, ranging from penetrative sex and masturbation to "outercourse" and electronic flirting.

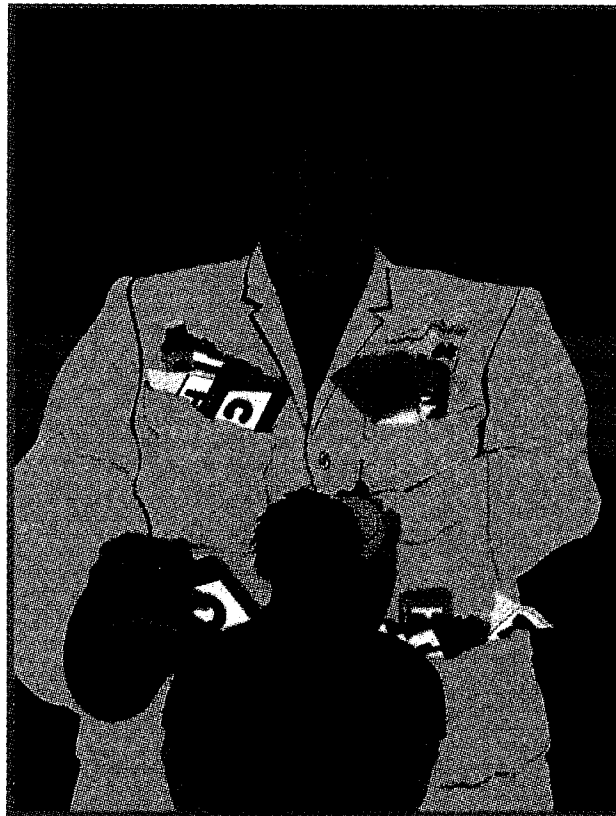
Nonetheless, Levine has been branded an "apologist for pedophilia." Concerned Women for America's Robert Knight condemned the book as an "evil tome" and "every child molester's dream." Levine has said in interviews that as a teen-ager she had a consensual sexual relationship with an older man, for which Knight diagnosed her with a version of Patty Hearst syndrome. Levine was "molested as a child and now advocates it for other children."

Minnesota state representative and Republican candidate for governor Tim Pawlenty said the book's release by the University of Minnesota Press amounted to "state-sanctioned support for ... molesting children" and demanded that the press cancel publication. He also confessed, as have most of Levine's critics (including psychotherapist turned radio shock-jock Dr. Laura), never to have read the book. Thankfully, the publisher rejected such expert opinions and stood by Levine. But it did institute, in a disturbing move against academic freedom, an extraordinary "external review" for future titles, which goes above and beyond the rigorous peer-review system.

The furor over *Harmful to Minors* perfectly illustrates its major point—that contemporary discussions over children and sex take place in an "empirical vacuum," in a fantasy landscape populated by innocent, unspoiled children and violent, incurable pedophile-pornographers. As Levine demonstrates, these sentimental whimsies and nightmarish creatures are no longer confined to the pages of 19th-century Romantic literature and Victorian tabloids from which they sprang. They've become organizing principles of law, psychology, popular culture, reproductive policy and sex education. As proliferating, self-fulfilling "meaning machines," these modern discourses may have fleshed

out their imaginative prototypes, but they are still not discourses "of the flesh."

Indeed, when one looks at contemporary public policy on children and sex, it's difficult to find anything like real children or anything like real sex. Consider the Child Pornography Prevention Act, recently struck down by the Supreme Court, which sought to ban not actual child pornography but "virtual child pornography"—any visual depiction, computer-generated or otherwise, that "appears to be" or "conveys the impression of" a "minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct." Or take Levine herself, who



has been inventively dubbed by Judith Reisman an "academic pedophile"—a category that has, as of yet, still to make its way into the penal code.

**H***armful to Minors* works best as a tempered discourse analysis—à la Michel Foucault but without his keen cynicism. Levine begins with a central contradiction: Although "law and ideology" consider childhood an entirely separate, antithetical category from adulthood, children in fact participate in

every aspect of the adult material and cultural world. We protect the "idealized child" from sin and knowledge, but real children have credit cards, enroll in college courses, surf the Internet with greater proficiency than their parents, and have disturbingly adult capacities for pleasure. So when it comes to sex, Levine argues that the modern family confronts the paradoxical, "self-canceling task of inducting the child into the social world of sexuality and at the same time protecting her from it."

From here on, Levine draws upon media analysis, cultural history, social science, queer theory and interviews with parents, children and sex educators to construct genealogical accounts of how this modern crisis is managed and maintained. She recounts how the Christian fringe concept of "chastity education" became the abstinence-only sex education curriculum taught in most schools; how the image of the violent, monstrous stranger-pedophile came to dominate parent's fears, even though the majority of sexual abuse occurs within the home; how normal childhood affection, hostility, mimicry (playing doctor) and sex play (I'll show you mine if you show me yours) became the pathology of "sexual abuser disorder"; how the catch phrase "harmful to minors" became appended to movies, music and video games marketed toward minors. There's a lot to skewer in this mass of confusion, and Levine does it with determination.

*Harmful to Minors* falters, however, when it "aspires to the positive." Levine is savvy enough to refuse a programmatic approach toward sex. She knows that fulfilling desire is a restless, lifelong process and that "comfort with the unknown may be the most important ally in the interrogation of desire." Still, there is something a bit facile about her cures, which veer from the macro-political to the micro-personal. Levine understands that what



makes children most vulnerable to sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection are the same injustices—poverty, racism, patriarchy and homophobia—that make people generally vulnerable to exploitation. So she argues that if we really want to protect kids from sexual abuse, we would first see to it that they are well-fed, well-educated and well-clothed, that they have access to decent health care, supportive community structures and political institutions.

Levine also advocates what she calls “sensuality education.” She argues that “sex education can surely be integrated into the whole curriculum,” not just biology and health classes, but language and literature courses as well. She proposes a reading list of “truthful fictions” comprised of, among others, Sappho, Shakespeare, Whitman, Dickinson, Adrienne Rich and Sonia Sanchez, so that kids can explore varieties of erotic expression. Pleasure is the pedagogy here, and reminiscent of Foucault’s oft-forgotten *The Uses of Pleasure and Care of the Self* (volumes 2 and 3 of *History of Sexuality*), Levine invokes terms like “skill,” “technique” and “expertise.”

It’s hard to quibble with either children’s welfare or progressive sex education. But Levine seems to think that with a combination of the two, we can instill in children something like an ethics of sex: “The same things that make you a solid member of your third-grade class—cooperation, respect, integrity—also make you a considerate lover, a consistent safe-sex practitioner, a person able to say yes or no to sex and honor the consent of a partner.”

Here I would have to disagree. It’s not in the third grade or in boho high schools where one learns sexual ethics; ethics arise in moments of crisis. In easier times, we’re content to hum along without much reflection. If we’re looking for sexual ethics, it’s not toward safety and pleasure to which we should turn, but rather toward danger and struggle, to the experiences of people with AIDS who confront sexual risk daily, to the ethics of sex workers who negotiate sexual danger as part of the job. Kids could learn a lot from these people; they can also learn a lot from their own mistakes, from pregnancy scares and STDs, from sexual experiences that end badly. It’s in turning away from these experi-

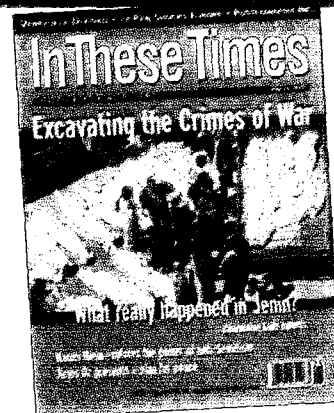
ences that *Harmful to Minors* comes up short. It’s in skirting the ever-present potential for disaster implicit in every quest for pleasure that Levine, though she rails against the “perils of protecting children from sex,” remains something of a protectionist.

**H**armful to Minors stumbles at precisely the same place that has confounded queer, liberationist and feminist sex radicals for years. We’re cautious of specifying what good sex is, so instead we talk about sexual pleasure in some rather vague terms, as if it were a self-evident quality. Because we want sexual pleasure to square with progressive ideals, we often talk about the quest for pleasure as if it, in and of itself, constituted a democratic, egalitarian and liberatory enterprise all at once. Levine holds, for example, that kids seek sex for the same reasons that adults do: “They like or love the person they are having it with. It gives them a sense of beauty, worthiness, happiness, or power. And it feels good.”

This is often true, of course. But we, adults and minors alike, also have sex with people we dislike, with people we profess to hate. We do it in spite of, or indeed because of, its ugliness and worthlessness, because, as the kids say these days, it’s nasty and freaky, because it makes us feel bad. We fuck because we are compelled by some inner itch that’s not always reducible to sexual pleasure, because it’s easier than leaving, easier than finding a ride home, easier than talking. Sexual pleasure is indissoluble from displeasure, and the difference between the two can turn on a dime. It’s just when we think we have sex figured out, when we think we know how to please and protect ourselves and our lovers, that we find ourselves on the brink of being painfully surprised.

And despite our incessant obsession with the sex lives of other people, despite Dr. Ruth, the Kama Sutra, *Sex in the City* and *Cosmo’s* latest tips on mind-blowing, multiple orgasms, despite all the ways in which sex and how to have it are thrown up for public consumption, most of us still prefer to have sex with the lights out. Sex in the dark can be comforting, familiar. It can also be alien, dangerous—and in some knotty space in between, we find pleasure. We cry out for mercy as we cry out for more. ■

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# City on Fire

By Sandy Zipp

The Cold War is more than 10 years gone now, yet its resilient spell lingers in unexpected ways and places—not least in Central Asia, where the political and human fallout of U.S. and Soviet realpolitik has re-

## **Survival City: Adventures among the Ruins of Atomic America**

By Tom Vanderbilt

Princeton Architectural Press

228 pages, \$25

emerged on the world stage as terrorism. Now Americans again live with a vague fear of nameable but distant enemies they don't understand, who may strike at any time, and against which the best defenses seem invisible and random, mere technological wishes and lucky breaks in intelligence gathering.

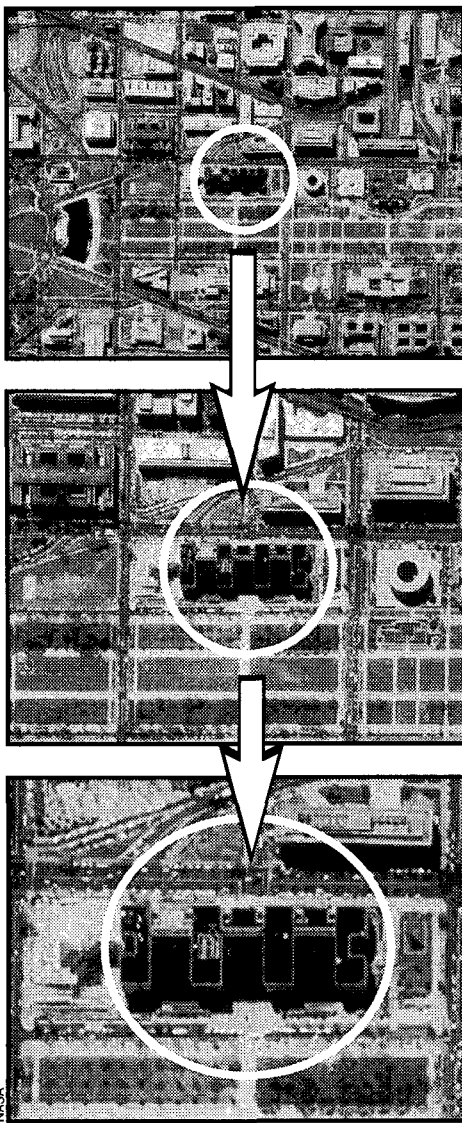
Those few years between Bush presidencies that we are beginning to call "the '90s" are said to mark a brief delusional interlude, a mass illusion of wealth and splendor without consequence hovering dream-like between long ages of insecurity, polarization and slow-burning anxiety. But this paranoid version of history—and of the future—would seem compelling only if the Cold War itself had not been a fable about world history in which two superpowers continually reassured themselves that the other was bent on global domination.

The Cold War wasn't myth—there were, of course, gulags, ICBMs, blacklists, spy games, summits and treaties. But it was a kind of distortion, a bipolar conflict that resonated globally because Soviet and U.S. Cold Warriors possessed the means to destroy the planet and simultaneously transform Vietnamese, Nicaraguan, Chilean and Afghan troubles into the out-sourced free-fire zones of the contest for ideological supremacy.

Now that some of those who struggled to think of themselves and their societies outside the East-West binary—those who claimed the mantle of the "Third World"—are turning their anger at the results of the Cold War on the victor, the distortion is fully visible. This is not to say that the Cold War had no real con-

tents, no real claims on the lives and imaginations of both Americans and Soviets. But if its effects were most visible, ironically, on the margins of the conflict, in the war-ravaged economies and societies of a Vietnam or an Afghanistan, in the United States the effects of the Cold War were, as Tom Vanderbilt puts it in *Survival City*, "both present and invisible."

Part travelogue, part history, *Survival City* is a sure and subtle guide to uncovering the physical remnants of a conflict that rarely became much more than an abstract mental construct for most Americans. The



book is a tour of real Cold War places—test grounds, missile silos, fallout shelters, bunkered command-and-control centers, experimental communities, forgotten missile defense outposts, vast underground nuclear waste storage halls. Like the abandoned inner city in the photographs of Camilo Jose Vergara, these remains are the ruins of an age of ostensible progress. "Underground, behind closed doors, classified, off the map, already crumbling beyond recognition, or right in plain view," the Cold War, Vanderbilt writes, "has left an imprint as widespread yet discreet as the tracings of radioactive particles that blew out of the Nevada Test Site in the 1950s."

And yet its meaning is elusive. "All wars end in tourism," notes Vanderbilt, but no memorials exist to this war, and he is the first person to write a guidebook to the interlinked mental and physical space of these battlefields.

Vanderbilt compares the Cold War enigma to an abandoned Nike missile site. Linchpin of a partly built surface-to-air missile system designed to pick enemy nuclear bombers out of the sky, the Nike missile defense system was called "the last-ditch defender of our cities" for a few brief years in the late '50s and '60s, before, like every other missile defense system since, it was rendered obsolete by changing tactics and technology. Nike sites still ring U.S. cities, but they bear no historical markers and little revealing insignia. Even abandoned, they preserve their secrecy. "In plain view," they are "nonetheless occluded," functioning as "an apt metaphor for a war that was real yet imaginary, abstract yet concrete, everywhere and nowhere."

These kinds of half-hidden structures remain as both evidence and symbol of the Cold War's sublimated violence. They reveal the Cold War's split character: progress and peacetime prosperity on the surface, "but underneath, a repressed subconscious of murky chambers, false fronts, and assassination plots."

"Survival City" is the name that journalists in 1953 gave to a group of buildings in the Nevada desert used to sample the



effects of atomic explosions on human settlements. But for Vanderbilt the phrase is also an idea and a moment. It is a brief moment in the history of the city as an idea, an ominous point when the city, as a collective ordering of human commerce, intellect and resources, returned "to the notions of violence and protection inherent in the city's historical founding."

With the traditional city a target, Cold War bureaucrats and planners resorted to one guiding idea: expertise in architecture and engineering could ensure survival in a nuclear attack on the U.S. mainland. The Cold War was "like one massive eye, a new way of looking at the world, including the city."

Vanderbilt begins his history of that eye with a short account of the close relations between techniques of aerial survey and aerial bombing. From balloons and biplanes to Dresden and Hiroshima, he demonstrates that "the aerial view had revealed the grim truth that the visualization of a city in its entirety was a visualization of a city that could be destroyed; a city that had become, in the intercontinental range and satellite tracking of the Cold War, a target."

After Hiroshima, the old city seemed to be destroyed, both as a matter of looming fact and of metaphor. The skies above our downtowns no longer needed to turn dark with bombers; now death could come silently, in the shape of a single plane or missile visible only on some vigilant radar screen. Many defense thinkers and urban planners assumed this was to be the ultimate end of the city, and this kind of thinking gave new impetus to longstanding distrust of city life. Prewar ideas of urban decentralization in utopian garden cities returned to planners' drawing boards, and the idea of a city as it had been conceived for millennia suddenly seemed, in planner Tracy Augur's words, "obsolete" and "economically unsound and dangerous."

Of course, as Vanderbilt notes, "It is very difficult to locate the influence of the atomic bomb in the suburban drift." In fact, few historians of city or suburb would give nuclear paranoia a major role in postwar urban decentralization. It was a minor tributary to a strong stream of suburbanization well underway when U.S.-Soviet tension first began to be felt in domestic life in the late '40s. Still, Cold War ideals and tensions underlay much thinking about space in this period and shaped how people envisioned shel-

ter and community. Ultimately, pessimism about the future of life in cities gave rise to new architectural forms, and a range of now largely forgotten experiments in the architecture of survival.

The ideal of "Survival City" called for a "blast-resistant architectural profile" found in all manner of Cold War buildings. Some of these are mere bunkers, thick concrete shells protecting underground control centers, weapons

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## Test grounds, bunkers, missile silos, fallout shelters, experimental communities, vast underground nuclear waste storage halls ...

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production facilities or shelters. From Project Greek Island, a massive bunker hidden under West Virginia's Greenbrier Resort built to preserve "continuity in government" by sheltering as many members of Congress as could have made it out of Washington, to Cheyenne Mountain, the hollowed-out peak in Colorado that houses the North American Aerospace Defense Command, to dozens of other, smaller-scale atomic redoubts, the Cold War founded a new reticent military architecture that tried to melt into its surroundings rather than display its power and martial spirit.

With this new ideal, both "the private space of the home" and the idea of the city were "being opened to the contingencies of national defense." At Frenchman's Flat in the Nevada desert, the government erected what Vanderbilt calls "a concrete and steel 'White City' of the atomic age." Here scientists tested a variety of industrial, commercial and residential structures in the hot wind of nuclear detonation, working to understand, as one newsreel narrator put it, "what really does happen when an atomic bomb kicks out at the world around it."

From the tests they began to construct their bombproof "profile": Domed roofs and cylindrical structures were key, as were windowless walls. In general, "anything humanizing about architecture, it

seemed—any considerations of light or ventilation or ornamentation—was potentially lethal." The buildings designed to house workers and military personnel at various test sites and proving grounds, many of them now long abandoned, inherited a similar functional, austere, low-slung form—what Vanderbilt terms "military moderne."

Vanderbilt puts government documents, military history and architectural, urban planning and design history in close conversation with his own wanderings among the ruins. Some readers may find the book almost as inscrutable as the Cold War landscape itself; his dense meanderings won't repay idle readers. That will be their loss, though, because the value in following Vanderbilt's journeys is not in any single verdict on Cold War culture, but in a series of discoveries, insights and connections. He revels in the strange moments when Cold War secrecy reasserts itself: Visiting the site of a 1962 nuclear test near the infamous Area 51, a Department of Energy guide tells him, "with quiet officiousness," that "you can photograph the crater, but you can't photograph the sky behind the crater."

**S**urvival City ends with a short postscript about the events of September 11, 2001. The story of Vanderbilt's journey back to his Brooklyn home from lower Manhattan that morning is paired with an account of the country's blind groping at what the attack meant in the days that followed. Written only a few days later, it still reads much like many of the accounts we have nine months on. The events of that morning are still too immediate to have fully registered; they are still told as personal narrative and jumbles of news reports and pundits' off-the-cuff analyses.

But for Vanderbilt, the falling towers and smoke roiling out over the spires of Gotham recall the fears and visions of a bygone era. Now that atomic anxiety has morphed into the terrorism scare, abstract fears of death from above have transformed into inchoate worry about random madmen bent on destroying us from within. If we are to accept any form of mobilization for preparedness, particularly that which asks us to transform our mental and physical landscapes in the name of security, it should be with the full knowledge that, as Vanderbilt reminds us, "There is no safety in walls." ■

# Out with the Old

By Matt Weiland

**L**ike Pico Iyer or Oliver Sacks, Alexander Stille is a kind of intrepid cultural reporter with an ear for dialogue and an eye for the high-concept. He excels at writing the

**The Future of the Past**  
By Alexander Stille  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
368 pages, \$25

intellectual profile, long nonfiction pieces typically featuring a strong narrative, a tinge of mystery and a far-flung locale. It's an appealing and effective form (if better-suited to the pages of a magazine than a book), and it yields amusing, sympathetic portraits.

His new book, *The Future of the Past*, collects a dozen of his pieces from recent years, most of them published in *The New Yorker*. It's the kind of book well-intentioned editors put together all the time: a loosely-themed collection that doesn't quite live up to its flap-copy aspirations but serves as fodder for endless barroom arguments and breakfast table debates. In most of the essays, Stille hitches along with an articulate and passionate researcher of one stripe or another—an Italian anthropologist in Papua New Guinea, an American primatologist in Madagascar, a French archaeologist in Egypt—in an effort to examine the ways technology affects societies in transformation, and seeking throughout to capture “the complexity, strangeness and contradictions of transformation” itself.

Stille tends to champion the passion and curiosity of the researchers he follows, even as he reveals their extraordinary blend of dedication and arrogance. Upon being introduced to Stille, the expert on non-mechanized pond systems of sewage treatment in India apologizes for more-or-less deliberately ignoring his name: “For every new person’s name I learn, I forget the name of an algae.” The primatologist in Madagascar, heading off

into the bush in search of a mysterious forest denizen, declares that “it’s probably nothing, but if I find it I’ll be on the cover of *Science* magazine for sure!”

**O**ne general theme that emerges is the troubling degree to which saving the past requires destroying it. This is most evident in Stille’s essays on work at two of the most important historical sites in Egypt: the restoration of the Great Sphinx of Giza and the efforts to build a modern version of the Great Library of Alexandria. As Mark Lehner, a University of Chicago Egyptologist who has overseen controversial efforts to uncover past restorations of the Sphinx,



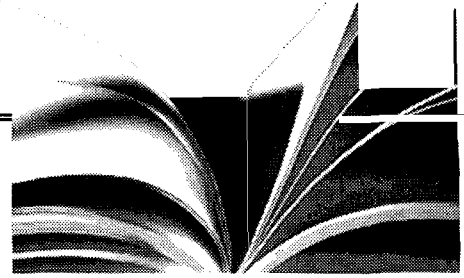
puts it: “You study the past, you kill it.” Meanwhile, the builders of the new library in Alexandria, upon encountering ancient remains (possibly of the original library) in the rubble of the construction site, “often try to hide or destroy what they find in order to avoid costly delays.” “Ironically,” Stille points out, “the revival of the library of Alexandria could be burying the ancient library once and for all.”

A second theme that emerges is the fact that even in cases where the past is recovered or preserved, cultural norms regarding the past are comically relative. In China, scores of sculptors produce modern replicas of the legions of miniature terra-cotta warriors that ancient emperors entombed with them, and then lend them to Western museums as authentic relics. If you’ve seen an exhibit of these miniature armies in recent years, chances are you’ve seen fakes. In India, efforts to rid the Ganges of fecal matter (so bathers can perform ritual ablutions safely) while remaining true to its sanctity in Hindu doctrine have resulted in hopelessly misguided uses of Western-style sewage treatments; the government “adopted a European technology that was designed more to protect fish than to protect people,” leaving Ganges bathers no better protected. And in Japan, Stille points out the example of the Shinto temple “originally built in the seventh century A.D. [that] is ritually destroyed every twenty years.

The Japanese think of it as being 1,300 years old, yet no single piece of it is more than two decades old.”

But the broadest question Stille raises is whether more information necessarily leads to more knowledge. “Will a wired world,” he asks, “be better informed than any other, or will information crowd out knowledge as we struggle to sort through the flood of messages and images with which we are bombarded each day?”

On this score, Stille’s best piece is “The Museum of Obsolete Technology,” a provocative account of the speed with which U.S. repositories of government documents are filling up. In 1994, he reports, the National Archives and Record Administration opened a new storage facility intended to last several decades. But despite the fact that it is “the third-largest government building and about half the size of the Pentagon, [it] is already





approaching its storage capacity [and] the space for paper records ... is expected to run out by 2003." At issue is not just lack of space, but the very principles of collection and preservation of historical memory. The risk is of "such a vast accumulation of records that the job of distinguishing the essential from the ephemeral becomes more and more difficult."

What he calls the "double-edged nature of technological change" is partially to blame. Just as increasing restoration work dooms some antiquities, the dizzying rate at which elec-

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## Are there some things best left forgotten or thrown out, and if so, who decides?

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tronic hardware has progressed has made older systems obsolete in record time, leaving many records potentially unreadable. "One of the great ironies of the information age," writes Stille in one of his most satisfying insights, "is that while the late twentieth century will undoubtedly have recorded more data than any other period in history, it will also almost certainly have lost more information than any previous era."

It's a maddening conundrum: Are some parts of the past worth forgetting? Are there things best left forgotten (or thrown out), and if so, who decides? Stille's account of Father Reginald Foster, the Milwaukee-born Carmelite monk who serves as senior Latinist to Pope John Paul II, provides the hint of an answer, if not a solution. In Stille's engaging profile, the voluble Foster emerges as a tireless champion of keeping Latin a living language. "There will be no grammar books, no textbooks," he tells his class. "You are going to have me, whether you like it or not. That's the system." Foster's view of the glory of Latin is uncompromising: "Latin is one of the greatest things to have happened in human history! If you don't know Latin, you know nothing!"

Here is the iconic defender of the past, striving to save the nearly extinct artifact of a long-dead age. But Foster is no sentimental simp, and Stille brings out a strik-

ing paradox in Foster's view of the past. In the course of his teaching, he creates widely admired, labor-intensive worksheets that his students implore him to save for future generations by having them published. But he steadfastly refuses, and instead "he destroys his elaborately constructed worksheets so that he has to reinvent his course every year, making each course new and unique."

It is Foster's story that Stille claims "first suggested the idea for this book," and though he doesn't draw together the implications of Foster's final act of anti-historicism, it seems to me to offer a vital lesson: amid a modern culture increasingly amnesiac and yet heritage-mad, the messiness of human agency is all we have, and the right path is a kind of historical memory that embraces neither the flush of the collector nor the gush of the nostalgist.

The collector's will to save everything is, after all, an exercise in futility, especially in a society increasingly tight on space and unwilling to pay the storage costs. But more importantly, it is an exercise in folly; however noble the sentiment, it is the kind of insipid thinking behind Internet chatrooms and high-

school yearbooks, and that way lies only the dopier strands of preservationist mania, droopy VH-1 *Behind the Music* specials, and the false moral equivalences that end up equating a suffragette's shoes with her speeches. Against this tide Foster represents the willingness to revise, to edit and to throw away.

Or as Miles Davis succinctly put it when asked for the secret of his beautifully spare compositions: "I always listen for what I can leave out." The nostalgist's easy tears for even the lowliest of lost documents, lost buildings, lost anything is no more worthy. In the natural world, historical loss is nature's beauty itself; "natural selection" is the elegant if misleading name given to such a process. Thomas Carlyle embodied its stony resolve when in 1835 he lent his drinking pal and intellectual compatriot John Stuart Mill the draft manuscript of his monumental history of the French Revolution—and subsequently discovered (to their mutual horror) that Mill had accidentally left it out where his servant could use it to kindle a fire. Two years of work destroyed in a moment, Carlyle cursed the day—and began to write it again. ■

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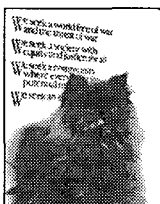
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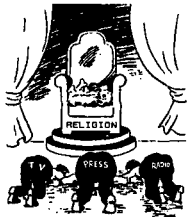
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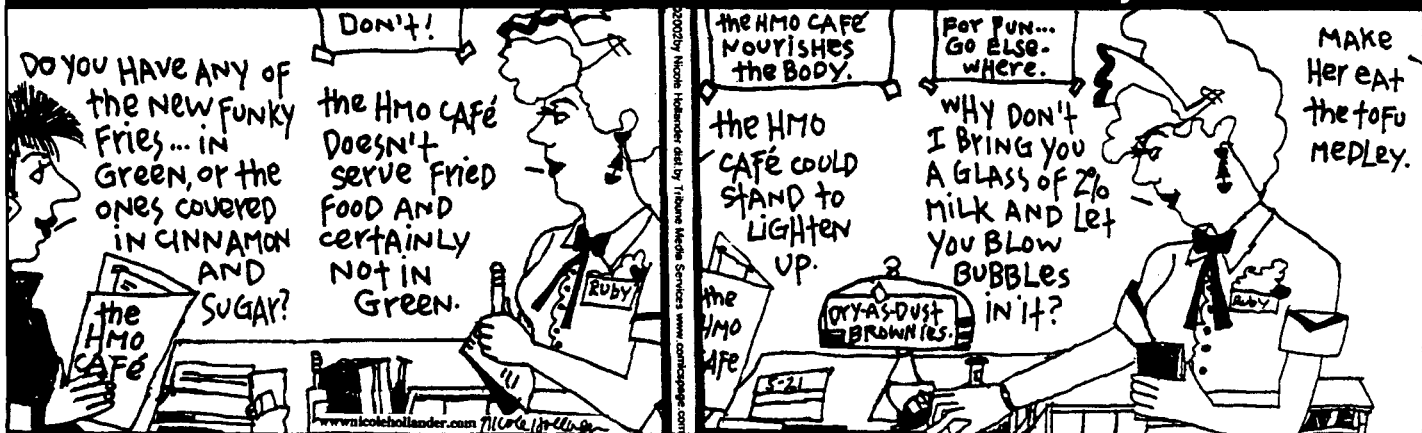
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## SYLVIA

By Nicole Hollander





Nicely put—that is, if you're a Pentagon press agent. I replied that I didn't think the Afghan civilian deaths were all necessarily accidental; and I pointed out that deliberate terror bombing of civilians was an established U.S. military strategy with prominent antecedents—Dresden, Tokyo, Vietnam—that is still hotly debated at war colleges around the world. The theory goes that if civilians provide the infrastructure for an army, then bombing will make them abandon their supporting tasks—factory work, shelter and concealment, food gathering, etc.

Morality aside, more than a few military analysts believe this tactic to be pointless: German industrial production grew during the intense Allied bombing campaign in 1943-1944, and draft resistance in the Fatherland was rare. But that hasn't stopped our government from trying terror bombing again. Lacking a legitimate strategic motive, the rationale of our bombers becomes revenge. "They did it first"—the Germans in London and al-Qaeda on Liberty Street in Lower Manhattan—"so it's just too bad for the civilians."

I don't agree that it's just too bad. But Barone (assuming, I imagine, that I worship on the left side of Orwell's altar) brought me up short with his trump card: "Orwell ... basically took the position that in one sense any wartime death is a tragedy. ... Why should we be any less concerned about an 18-year-old man getting killed than an 18-year-old woman or an 80-year-old woman?"

Call me old-fashioned, but (ignoring Barone's misuse of the word "tragedy") I said I did think it worse for an innocent bystander to be killed than for a soldier and, if that bystander is a woman, all the more unfortunate. Women, including grandmothers, are the bearers and nurturers of babies, after all, and if their special status as such disappears then we in the "civilized" West become little better than our enemies.

But I was flummoxed by the Orwell citation; surely, I asked Barone, Orwell didn't consider children to be equivalent victims. Yes, said Barone, "he did add children in there. Read the Orwell essay."

So I did. Really a column, published in London's *Tribune* in May 1944, the piece appears in the collected works but not my greatest hits anthology. Unsurprisingly, Barone had misquoted Orwell—he did set children apart. To my dismay, however, I discovered that the U.S. *News* man hadn't really misrepresented Orwell's overall argument. In the course of attacking a British pamphleteer opposed to the bombing of civilians in Germany and Italy, the high priest of anti-totalitarianism had ridiculed the notion that wars could have rules at all: "All talk of 'limiting' or 'humanizing' war is sheer humbug," Orwell declared. "The first question that strikes you is: Why is it worse to kill civilians than soldiers? Obviously one must not kill children if it is any way avoidable, but it is only in propaganda pamphlets that every bomb drops on a school or an orphanage."

In any event, Orwell's concern for youngsters seems shallow, almost *pro forma*. "Up to date," he wrote, "German bombs have killed between six and seven thousand children in this country. This is, I believe, less than the number killed in road accidents in the same period." Meanwhile, "Every time a German submarine goes to the bottom about fifty young men of fine physique and good nerve are suffocated. Yet people who would hold up their hands at the very words 'civilian bombing' will repeat with satisfaction such phrases as 'We are winning the battle of the Atlantic.'"

As a newspaper columnist, I'm acutely aware that the primary obligation of my trade is to be interesting, not to be right. But the Orwell on display here is more than just provocative; he's very, very cold. For the first time, I realized why I could never be quite the fan I'm supposed to be; why I don't find it funny when Orwell, by way of brilliantly defending Kipling, puts down the "pansy left" that reviled the poet of empire. I began to understand why Orwell's biographer Bernard Crick writes eloquently of his subject's "love of nature, love of books and literature" but not of his love for people, let alone women and children.

Which isn't to say that Orwell wasn't a convivial fellow with lots of friends and a family. Or that he didn't have a point. The so-called rules of war are hypocritical: "War is of its nature barbarous, it is better to admit that. If we see ourselves as the savages we are, some improvement is possible, or at least thinkable." But his refusal to make the obvious distinction between combatants and noncombatants reveals the Orwell that always made me uneasy, the side that others have associated with the pessimistic and chilly personality of Winston Smith in 1984. I don't accept Anthony West's contention that 1984 was mainly a sadomasochistic fantasy based on Orwell's miserable boarding school experience, rather than simply a good political novel, but now I can grasp the analysis.

"What a simple, straightforward, absolutist mental world George Orwell lived in," writes Norman Sherry, remarking on Orwell's bloodlessly one-dimensional review of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*. Maybe it's absolutist coldness that enables the merciless political right to treat Orwell like its prize pig; why Barone can casually resort to him to justify the dismembered corpses of the innocent; why Norman Podhoretz was able to write his narcissistic Cold War essay in *Harper's Magazine* in 1983, "If Orwell Were Alive Today" (which should have been subtitled, "He Would Be Me").

Still, nothing the militarist, power-worshipping right does astonishes me anymore. More interesting is why the left so often genuflects to Orwell. Is it residual guilt over Soviet communism and the gulag? The right thrills to Orwell the socialist, who saw through the Stalinist fraud during the Spanish Civil War and then skewered his own kind for their continuing blindness to Soviet crimes. (I sometimes wonder if they think we chose the wrong side in World War II.)

For my part, I've never bought the Orwellian guilt trip. The Beatles pretty much destroyed Marxist/Maoist chic by the time I was a teen-ager, what with "Back in the USSR" and "Revolution," so I never had to wrestle with The God That Failed. But why so many communist "dupes" were made to suffer for wanting to believe in a utopian dream of social equality promoted by our wartime Soviet ally—while dupes of Hitler like Joseph Kennedy and Charles Lindbergh suffered only scant embarrassment—is a hypocrisy that Orwell on his better days would have eviscerated. Or would he?

For the duration of Bush's war on terrorism (which every day sounds a little bit more like the permanent war described in 1984), Barone, William Bennett and their friends are free to use Orwell for anything they please. As far as I'm concerned, they can have him all to themselves. You can mark me down with the "pansy left." ■

John R. MacArthur is the publisher of *Harper's Magazine* and the author, most recently, of *The Selling of "Free Trade."*

# Farewell, George

Why I can't  
worship at the  
altar of Orwell  
anymore



By John R. MacArthur

**T**he instant cliché that “nothing will ever be the same after September 11” has been grating on me ever since it was coined. In part it’s my disgust with the Bush administration’s same old petropolitik in the Mideast, in part the—dare I employ my own cliché?—Orwellian ring of the phrase. (Nothing’s the same? Well, that’s how Stalin justified countless murders, torture and state-engineered famine.)

But events have overtaken my natural abhorrence for media-speak, and I’ve got to admit that at least one thing will never be the same for me post-9/11: my reflexively good opinion of George Orwell, icon-saint of the non-communist left, whose holy reputation has always rested, at least in part, on its usefulness to the most unsavory elements of the anti-communist, neoconservative right.

In truth, I’ve never been that attached to Orwell; somehow his writing fails to evoke the passionate admiration I feel for Albert Camus or Graham Greene, to name two of my favorite *litterateurs* who also practiced journalism. But as a left-leaning journalist myself, I’ve always thought myself obliged to exalt Orwell, whatever my gut told me. In the small corner of the

media that I inhabit, one could say that it’s politically correct to love Orwell; and there is, to be sure, much to be loved about his work, his journalism of course, but also his remarkable talent for exposing hypocrisy and demolishing cant.

**S**o a few months back I bristled when I was contradicted on a radio show by a, shall we say, reactionary journalist named Michael Barone, who invoked Orwell to excuse civilian casualties in Afghanistan caused by U.S. bombing. Barone, of *U.S. News & World Report*, had drawn attention to himself with an extraordinary statement made on Fox TV, seconding NPR correspondent Mara Liasson, to the effect that Americans shouldn’t get too upset about “collateral damage” during Operation Enduring Freedom: “Civilian casualties are not, as Mara says, news. The fact is that they accompany wars. What’s newsworthy here is that the United States taxpayer and the United States military have spent billions of dollars to develop these precision weapons, which most of the time hit a very precisely defined military target.”

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